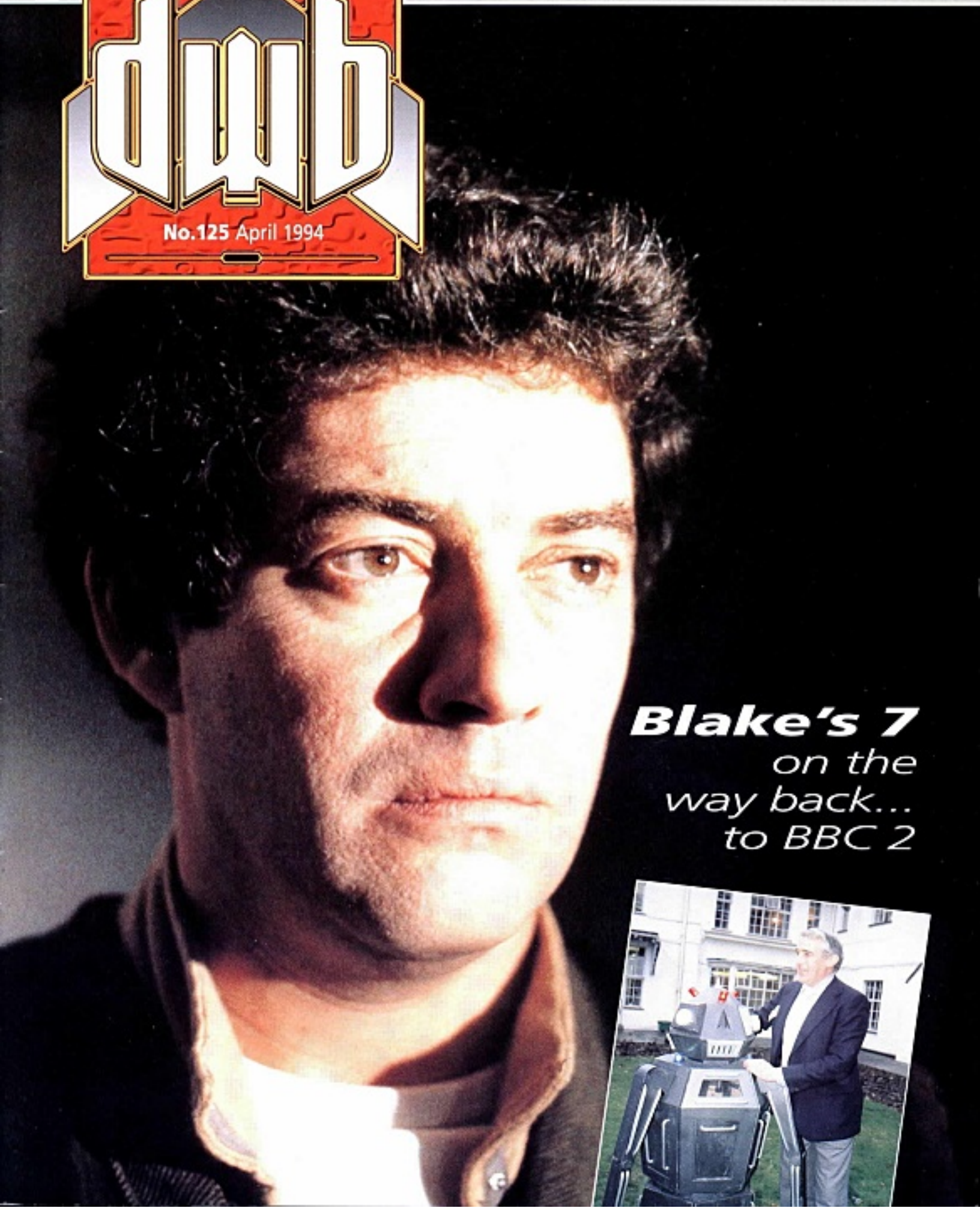
dwb

No.125 April 1994

Doctor Who's double return!!



Blake's 7
on the way back... to BBC 2

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Put not your trust in computers...particularly ones called Ziggy! Perhaps spotting that it was the 13th, Ziggy crashed today — and managed to corrupt one of the files containing the BLAKE'S 7 series survey results in the process... Now I gave it a try, but there was never much hope of my managing to re-enter 350 forms in one day...and I haven't. So, my apologies, but the second half of the Blake survey (Favourite characters, etc) will have to wait till next month...and I can only hope the extra photos filling the space make up for the delay.

Anyway — interesting how things come back to haunt you... I was browsing through the Internet Who discussions a few days ago when I saw a message berating DWB... 'That magazine sacrificed all credibility after it claimed there was a sixth episode to *The Daemons*', it said! Somebody else pointed out the cover date of that issue, one year ago...

In the meantime, see you at Manopticon. I'll probably be in the bar, dressed like Al Colavicci. Well, Amanda Murray said I was beginning to dress like him last Tavern. Not sure what to make of that...

ANTHONY

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Cover: Gareth Thomas as Blake - *The Way Back*. Inset - Terry Nation and friend.... *(© BBC Video)*
Inside front cover: The Eighth Doctor? Richard O'Brien in THE CRYSTAL MAZE *(© Channel Four Television)*
Inside back cover: Top - Colin Baker as the Doctor in *Attack of the Cybermen*; Bottom left - Colin Baker, *The Mark of the Rani*; Bottom right - The Rani (Kate O'Mara) & The Master (Anthony Ainley), *The Mark of the Rani (Fitzroy Source/BBC Video)*
Back cover: Jenna (Sally Knyvette) in BLAKE'S 7 *(©Fitzroy Source)*

THANKS TO: Roger Clark, David Gauntlett, J Jeremy Bentham, Tony Clark, Anthony McKay, Anthony Clark, Dave Owen, Shams Uddin, BBS Listings, BBC Video, Rebecca Levene at Virgin Books, and anyone I've forgotten.

Next issue: 1984, ten years on... Inferno, Camfield & Combat...

DOUBLE WHAMMY!

ONE O'Brien Set to Pilot the TARDIS?

'I'll play a Regeneration Game'

AMBLIN ENTERTAINMENT have bought the rights to produce new series of DOCTOR WHO, a statement confirmed early in March. This confirmation, echoed by the BBC press office a few days later, doesn't make the series' return a certainty, but ensures that any new series will be a co-production between Amblin and BBC Enterprises.

No other contracts have been signed, but (as hinted in DWB124) Richard O'Brien is the front runner to play the Doctor. The 52 year old actor, who has long pledged to "grow old disgracefully", first came to fame as the creator of the cult *Rocky Horror Show* (which he discusses in the *DWB Interview File*) and also played a recurring villain in the final season of ROBIN OF SHERWOOD. While not widely known in the US, the success of *Rocky Horror* on stage and screen has given him a certain cult appeal in the States, upon which Amblin might build, and he has been in discussions with Amblin since deciding to leave THE CRYSTAL MAZE (a programme he once said he'd be happy to present forever) last Autumn, and is known to be their preferred choice. Should negotiations between Amblin and O'Brien fall through, Amblin have indicated that they would prefer a British actor, and have a number of candidates in mind...none of whom are likely to include the more horrific suggestions of the tabloid press. Suggestions of Michael Crawford, similarly, appears to have been a ruse to divert attention.

O'Brien's appearances on THE CRYSTAL MAZE, where he frequently seems detached from events, as if existing on some other level in a manner reminiscent of the more eccentric Doctors, have made him a common suggestion for the role over recent years. O'Brien handed the series over to his successor, Edward Tudor Pole, at the beginning of a Christmas special transmitted last year, but can currently be seen in Thursday night repeats on Channel Four. At the same time, O'Brien is keeping busy by supervising a new 21st Anniversary tour of *the Rocky Horror Show*, in which Patricia (*Dragonfire*) Quinn again plays Magenta (the role she created in the original stage production and film), alongside which he will sometimes present his one man show *Mephistopheles Smith*.

OLD MEETS NEW?

Contrary to speculation that Amblin might choose to start from scratch, it now seems likely that O'Brien's Doctor will be the eighth incarnation of the familiar Time Lord, as a *Sunday Times* report on 6th March quoted a spokesman as suggesting that past Doctors might make cameo appearances (a suggestion Jon Pertwee welcomed). The *Sunday Times* report also suggested, however, that the Amblin series might 'redo' plots from the series' past.

The Amblin WHO is likely to be financed with the funds laid aside for the second season of SEAQUEST, which, despite slowly improving reviews, is still sliding in the ratings and seems unlikely to be renewed,

Continued page four...

TWO Film production about to begin?

THE RIGHTS to produce a DOCTOR WHO film now lie with French company Lumiere, whose video division is well regarded for their efforts with THE AVENGERS video releases. They have entered into a partnership with Coast to Coast, who have held the film rights to DOCTOR WHO since 1987.

It's understood that Lumiere's interest in the film rights almost derailed the Amblin deal, until Tony Greenwood's American trip resolved the problem. Coast to Coast's rights expire on April the 7th, but cannot lapse while a film is actually in production, so it's believed Lumiere intend to begin production before that deadline. A prospective script was finished some months ago, and has no connection with that developed for Coast to Coast/Green Light in the late eighties, as summarised in DWB97 (to generally critical response). Felice Arden is believed to be the only Coast to Coast representative connected to the current project, and then only in an executive producer capacity (ie: financial input only, with no artistic involvement). Peter Litten and George Dugdale, who wrote the original story to the Coast to Coast project, are no longer involved with the company.

Instead, Lumiere's script comes from the pen Denny Martin Flynn, who scripted *Star Trek VI* and has adapted classics (including *Don Quixote*) for Radio Three. The script is understood to be impressive, the author having taken a considerable interest in the series' past, introducing a number of unobtrusive references to past stories, and stresses that actors must approach DOCTOR WHO seriously... As this indicates, the Doctor concerned **is** a future incarnation of the Time Lord played on television by Hartnell and his successors — not a parallel version.

Three companions are featured in the script — two of whom (including a character familiar from the series) are travelling with the Doctor at the film's beginning. The third, an American woman, is introduced during the course of the film, and speculation is rife that Jane Seymour, said to be linked to the project, will take this role. As to the Doctor, it's likely that an American 'leading' actor will be cast, but the candidates under consideration are understood to have won themselves good reputations as both directors and character actors in recent years. No director has yet been appointed, but prominent candidates are again in line.

Hopefully, production on the film will be completed in time for release towards the end of the year...

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: A one year subscription (12 issues) costs £33/US$69 (or £35/$79 for first-class card-reinforced envelopes). Make cheques/POs payable to 'DWB' and send to: *DWB Subscriptions, 5 Whitegate Gardens, Harrow-Weald, Middlesex HA3 6BW.*
CLUBS & LOCAL GROUPS: Purchase DWB in bulk for your members at 50p off the cover price (min. 6 issues). SAE to P.O. box for details.

ADVERTISING RATES AND CONDITIONS: Classified ads - £3.95 for up to 45 words (10p per additional word). FAN: one page (A4 camera ready) £140; half page (182x130/93x265mm) £70; quarter page (93x130/44x265mm); £35; sixth page (61x130mm) £25; eighth page (44x130mm/93x63mm) £18. COMMERCIAL: one page £180; half page £90; quarter page £45; sixth page £32; eighth page £23. •Full colour rates available on request. •Prices inclusive of VAT. •15% discount available for three or more insertions. •10% discount for charity-related ventures. •Adverts must be camera ready and of a tidy appearance, surrounded by a neat black box conforming to the exact dimension. Adverts which do not comply to this criteria will be returned.

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ONE OF OUR DALEKS IS MISSING!

The WOLVES of Fenric, the Midlands DOCTOR WHO Group who organised the Birmingham DOCTOR WHO Exhibition, are appealing for the return of a Dalek stolen en route for return to BBC Enterprises.

The missing Dalek, a white and gold *Remembrance* model, was left in a van parked in Stourbridge for the weekend prior to return to the BBC about a month ago. When the driver returned on Sunday night he found the radio gone and both the Dalek and the top half of the Special Weapons Dalek missing, though a God of Ragnarok and a Mandrell had been left behind. The Special Weapons Dalek was soon found elsewhere in the car park but the Dalek has yet to be found, though a member of the public saw it wheeled through Stourbridge town centre on Saturday night!

The Wolves are naturally disappointed that anyone should have taken such an action, but merely want to recover the Dalek. Along with DWB, they appeal to any fan who might know the whereabouts of the Dalek to get in touch. It will be impossible to sell or show the Dalek without discovery, so there is no point in keeping it! If necessary, the Dalek should be delivered to the police, or left in a safe place and the Wolves, DWB or the BBC informed of its whereabouts...No questions will be asked provided the Dalek is returned.

•The Wolves of Fenric may be contacted at: 161 Dangerfield Lane, Darlaston, Wednesbury, Staffs WS10 7RU.

Amblin buy Who rights...

Continued from page three...

though BBC Enterprises will also be making a multi-million pound investment, which should help to ensure the survival of the series' innate 'Britishness' (certainly, Amblin have referred creative queries to the BBC, stating that they must be consulted). Steven Spielberg is understood to be taking a direct interest in the series (while promoting *Schindler's List*,which seems likely to win the Best Director Oscar which has so far eluded him, and preparing for his next film, *The Bridges of Madison County*), and has expressed an intention to direct for the series. Such direct involvement with a TV project, which in the past has occurred only after he had a poor year at the box office, contrasts markedly with his work on SEAQUEST, where he was frequently too busy to pay attention to early episodes.

The series is to be produced by Peter Wragg, a veteran producer of the highly regarded MAX HEADROOM. Ridley Scott is expected to direct the two hour introductory TV movie, which will lead into a thirteen episode first season (to be followed, hopefully, by full 22 episode runs in subsequent years), and intends to direct later episodes. Reports that Amblin have contacted Terry Nation have been widespread, but it is believed that he will be asked to accept a fee for allowing them to use the Daleks without interference. Ridley Scott, of course, began his career as a BBC designer before cutting his directorial teeth on ADAM ADAMANT LIVES!, and was originally assigned to work alongside Raymond Cusick on the first Dalek story, so it may well be that he will take the opportunity to update the creatures he almost designed thirty years ago...

Above: The cover for Marvel's 1995 *Doctor Who Yearbook*, out in the summer.

AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

WITH GARY LEIGH still too busy to gather news for DWB, and likely to remain so for the foreseeable future, a new newsdesk team is to be put in place for the duration. Under our new Editor's Choice programme, tenders are now invited from organisations interested in taking charge of the DWB newsdesk...

Tenders have already been received from organisations including Globelink News, whose spokesman Gus Hedges expressed the hope that "Globelink would soon be able to raise the DWB news operation to full warp drive in the Nathan-Turner/waste disposal relations department." The meaning of this comment is unclear. Mr Hedges also expressed his enthusiasm for DOCTOR WHO, suggesting that the next Doctor should perhaps be "An adventuring capitalist entrepreneur, in the mould of Sir John Harvey Jones, or even our own beloved proprietor, Sir Royston Merchant."

Other tenders are confidently expected, and we expect a competitive bid for the rights to hatch our news egg from the producers of The Day Today...

FANS CAMPAIGN AGAINST US WHO

A NUMBER of campaigns to oppose American production of DOCTOR WHO have been launched.

Introducing his open letter (reprinted in the letters pages this issue) Mark Challoner of Who-UK, says "The points I raise are important ones. If a blockbuster version does fail, the BBC will never be able to afford to produce DOCTOR WHO again (with or without a co-producer). With the exception of STAR TREK, can you think of a long-running block-buster SF series? For DOCTOR WHO to return as a short-lived and hugely expensive production bearing little resemblance to the show we know and love would be a very messy death and a dreadful shame." He calls upon fans to write to the BBC pointing out the 'perils' of co-production.

On February 26th, John Gorman of Stoke-on-Trent used Channel Four's RIGHT TO REPLY to launch his *Doctor Who Fans' Charter*, in which he demands (as later printed in a letter to *the Stage*)

'These are our demands – Who has the answers?'

DOCTOR WHO FANS' CHARTER

1 A new series to be produced in England.
2 To produce by the people who know the series and who made it a success in the sixties and seventies.
3 A popular (and suitable) English actor to play the Doctor (eg Robert Powell).
4 Wit — not slapstick!
5 A decent number of episodes (26 per annum at least).
6 Scripts which make sense (not like the last series).
7 No American/female Doctor Whos!
8 No sex or bad language (in some quarters it has been seen fit to introduce these but DOCTOR WHO has never needed sex or swear words to make it a success — And never will!)
9 Money made by the series to be spent on the series and not wasted elsewhere!
10 Lots of new aliens and a return of the better 'Monsters' from the past (Monsters make 'WHO'!)
11 A new series now (what else do Dr Who fans pay their license fee for!)

J Gorman

Stoke on Trent
Staffs

1)A new series to be produced in England.
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3)A popular (and suitable) English actor to play the Doctor (eg Robert Powell).
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9)Money made by the series to be spent on the series and not wasted elsewhere!
10)Lots of new aliens and a return of the better 'Monsters' from the past (Monster make 'WHO'!)
11)A new series now (what else do Dr Who fans pay their license fee for!)

RIGHT TO REPLY seemed unenthusiastic as to the Charter, to judge by their juxtaposition of the Ergon (from *Arc of Infinity*) with Gorman's demand for a 'return of the better 'Monsters' from the past', but Gorman hopes his charter will 'encourage renewed calls on the BBC to renew the series in a form acceptable to those dedicated to the series.'

"The producer of BBC1's toothless viewers' criticisms programme BITEBACK has resigned 'In frustration', reports the Independent. "A current BBC promotional trailer perhaps says more than it intends, by showing how Julie Walters is unable to get any hearing for her complaints at the BBC, instead having the BBC's favoured programmes presented to her!

COMMENT ***So, it's happening again. Yet another campaign has been launched, to "put forward fan opinion, and force the BBC to take notice of us at last..."***

Well, I can't help feeling that the organisers of these campaigns (and I must stress here, that this is merely my personal opinion) aren't looking at things realistically. Let's forget the question of whether, as the "Fan's Charter" seems to assume, their views represent the majority of fandom (from long inspection of the letters by DWB I've come to feel that the only thing fandom can agree upon is its diversity of opinion) and consider simply the practicalities of the current situation.

Amblin have bought the rights to produce DOCTOR WHO. Full stop. Signed, sealed and delivered. If Amblin want to make the series now there is no way the BBC can prevent them without buying the rights back — a costly exercise at best, and one which might, worst case, drag the BBC into a costly legal action (which would be appallingly damaging as the BBC attempts to demonstrate its financial acumen in the lead up to its Charter renewal). It's difficult to believe that the BBC, that same BBC which neglected DOCTOR WHO for years, would do that if even there were good reason. Without good reason, a fan campaign has no hope of persuading them to do so...

And there is no good reason why they should. There is no proof, no cast-iron reason to suppose that an Amblin production will prove disastrous for WHO. I have many reservations about the Amblin deal. There are things I've heard I don't like; there are precedents which are very disturbing. But there's nothing conclusive — nothing more than an instinctive fear of 'Americanisation'. And there are also some encouraging signs — to compare a worst-case American scenario to a vision of a new Golden Age for British WHO is specious and misleading.

The BBC isn't making British, Golden Age, WHO. Many would say they haven't made it for ten years, and that they have no interest in making it. Fan campaigns haven't won us a British WHO over the last five years — they can't win us it now. They may well have already damaged the series' image within the BBC, and to campaign against the new series now on offer will undoubtedly do so. To speak out now would be to cry wolf. All a campaign could possibly do is kill the Amblin deal — and with it our best, our only? realistic hope of the series returning to television. **Anthony Brown**

ENTERPRISES ANGERED BY CAR AD

BBC ENTERPRISES HAVE accused an advertising campaign featuring three former Doctors of infringing their rights to DOCTOR WHO.

The advert *(reprinted above)* shows Tom Baker, Jon Pertwee and Peter Davison inspecting a VW Golf, and claims "We've doctored the Golf. The new estate is 41% bigger on the inside." Enterprises claim that the advert (which has appeared on posters and in the press) relies on public recognition of DOCTOR WHO for its impact, Director of Public Relations Chris McLaughlin commenting that "this ad is about as far as you can go without painting the car blue and sticking a flashing light on the top."

Though disappointed that the spirit, if not the legality, of their rights have been infringed, Enterprises have decided against legal action on this occasion, but have warned advertisers against referring to the DOCTOR WHO image in future, adding that "strong letters" would have been exchanged had the actors been dressed as the Doctor...

Dreamwatch 94

is coming to the Park Inn International, Earls Court, London on the 29th & 30th October 1994.

Featuring:

A celebration of the 10th Anniversary of *The Caves of Androzani* with the cast and crew

The launch of the book of the inside story of *The Dark Dimension*, the story that never was.

Major event Sunday afternoon

Innovative Saturday night entertainment

Guests, dealers and much much more...

WATCH THIS SPACE FOR MORE DETAILS NEXT ISSUE.

briefly...

•THE BBC has licensed a DOCTOR WHO Laser adventure game to Space Race, who are discussing projects with a number of possible venues...Jon Pertwee is to promote the opening of centres, where players will battle Cybermen, Daleks, War Lords and 'brainwashed ' fellow players after entering through a TARDIS-like gateway...

•THE FOURTH STRANGER title, *The Terror Game*, will go into production soon. Colin Baker stars as The Stranger once again, but without Nicola Bryant, who is busy in America. *The Air Zone Solution* is to be rereleased via Pickwick video.

•EPISODE SIX of *The Green Death* was watched by 1,263,000 viewers...

•PYRAMIDS of Mars was chosen as the latest BBC2 repeat after LATE SHOW producer John Whiston viewed a copy and was astonished by the story...

•BBC1 ARE REPEATING the 1990 cult classic DARK SEASON (by the team behind CENTURY FALLS) on Tuesdays and Fridays from March 15th at (5.10pm). The early episodes may be gone...but you can still catch the second story...

•NO DATE is yet confirmed for BBC2's BLAKE'S 7 repeats, which may now slip back to July...

•Virgin's *AVENGERS Programme Guide*, due out on March 17th, has been delayed...

•PHILLIP HINCHCLIFFE has had to abandon plans to attend Manopticon (2-4th April) after he became committed to filming in Ireland. Manopticon will also see the convention debut of Hartnell companion and ex-BLUE PETER presenter Peter Purves...

•Latest US DOCTOR WHO videos are *The Mind Robber*, *The Keeper of Traken*, *The Masque of Mandragora*, *Mawdryn Undead*, *The Sontaran Experiment/Genesis of the Daleks* and *The Dalek Invasion of Earth*, released in February. The latter is the first six parter to be released as a twin pack in the States...

INNOVATION FOLDS

INNOVATION COMICS, publishers of a number of telefantasy adaptations, have become the latest victims of a contraction in the comics industry.

Innovation were founded in 1990, but had trouble maintaining regular delivery, which may have contributed to their failure to maintain their market share, and have now ceased trading. Their collapse will hit fans of their revisionary LOST IN SPACE comic hardest, as this title was seven issues into a twelve edition 'Year Two' scripted by Bill (Will Robinson) Mumy, detailing the Robinsons' tribulations after their arrival at Alpha Centauri and disastrous confrontation with the violent forces of Dr Smith's alien paymasters, Aeolus 14 Umbra. A two edition prequel set against the background of AIDS and the Star Wars project, *Project Robinson*, will also be left unfinished.

In addition, Innovation published a DARK SHADOWS series, set between episodes of the recent revival, a disappointing BEAUTY AND THE BEAST adaptation, which, not content with air-brushed artwork, rewrote or omitted episodes of the series judged 'unfaithful' to the series' concept, and an enjoyable QUANTUM LEAP series. The latter is again a sad loss, as the delayed annual, in which Sam was to leap into Ziggy, will now never appear...

**Amblin are reportedly unhappy with Nemesis' comic adaptation of SEAQUEST DSV, and may veto the publication of editions beyond the recent No.1.*

Survivors 4 axed

THE PROSPECTIVE fourth season of SURVIVORS, developed by Ian McCulloch for BBC Scotland with the approval of Terry Nation, has been abandoned after the BBC's Head of Drama, Charles Denton, decided not to take it further. McCulloch suggests that 'he prefers to invest in new projects, rather than revivals.'

McCulloch's proposal would have continued SURVIVORS, fifteen years on, from the Scottish episodes which closed the third season in 1977. Lucy Fleming and as many of the original cast as possible (including Carolyn Seymour) were to have returned, though McCulloch himself could only have appeared in flashback barring some unlikely plot developments...

briefly...

The New Adventures of Superman is now winning 9.8 million viewers, more than almost any programme in that slot has achieved in ten years!

In the US David Warner has recently appeared as Jor-El, with Dean Stockwell guesting the following week, while Lois is rumoured to accept Lex Luthor's proposal in the season cliffhanger...

THE NEXT GENERATION NEARS JOURNEY'S END

AS FILMING begins on the final episodes of THE NEXT GENERATION for television, it becomes clear that all sorts of familiar faces will return to tie up loose ends. Coming soon are:

**Genesis* (19/3/94), in which Lt. Barclay manages to create a situation in which members of the crew start to devolve into more primitive lifeforms. Directed by Gates McFadden

**Journey's End* (26/3/94), in which Wesley Crusher graduates from the Academy and meets an unexpected fate involving a colony of native Americans. Doug Wert appears for the third time as Jack Crusher and Eric Menyuk is The Traveller for a third time. This colony may be the home of the native American character slated for VOYAGER.

**First Born* (23/4/94), in which Worf and Alexander meet a Klingon from the future played by James Sloyan - who has previously been a Romulan and a Cardassian.

**Bloodlines* (30/4/94), in which Picard again meets Daimon Bok, who tried to kill him for revenge in *The Battle*. (Patrick Stewart has lobbied for the return of Bok ever since the first season).

*Patrick Stewart directs the last but one 1hr episode which features the return of Ensign Ro.

*The concluding two-hour story has been highly praised by the cast, several of whom say it is the best script they have had — and that they wish this was the film script instead of the much maligned real movie script! Called *All Good Things*, the story will have Picard moving both forwards and backwards in time, dealing with Q and possibly the elusive Tasha Yar.

The major DS9 event will be a reunion of three original series Klingons played by the original actors — all with suitably updated head ridges! In *Blood Oath*, John Colicos appears again as Kor (*Errand of Mercy*), Michael Ansara plays Kang (*Day of the Dove*), and William Campbell returns as Koloth (*The Trouble With Tribbles*).

Recent and upcoming DS9 episodes include...

**Playing God* (26/2/94), in which Dax tutors a prospective Trill host.

**Profit and Loss* (19/3/94)

**Blood Oath* (26/3/94), see above...

**The Maquis I & II* (23&30/4/90), which introduces the group of well meaning Starfleet renegades who will feature in VOYAGER.

•CIC's Provisional 1994 STAR TREK release schedule is...

March 7th
TNG 77 - *Descent II* & *Liaisons*
DS9 11 - *The Homecoming* & *The Circle*

April 5th
TNG 78 - *Interface* & *Gambit I*
DS9 12 - *The Siege* & *Invasive Procedures*

May 9th
TNG 79 - *Gambit II* & *Phantasms*
DS9 13 - *Cardassians* & *Melora*

June 6th
TNG 80 - *Dark Page* & *Attached*
DS9 14 - *Rules of Acquisition* & *Necessary Evil*

July 11th
TNG 81 - *Force of Nature* & *Inheritance*
DS9 15 - *Second Sight* & *Sanctuary*

August 8th
TNG 82 - *Parallels* & *The Pegasus*
TNG 83 - *Homeward* & *Sub Rosa*

September 5th
TNG 84 - *Lower Decks* & *Know Thine Own Self*

October 3rd
TNG 85 - *Masks* & *Eye of the Beholder*

November 14th
TNG 86 - *Genesis* & *Journey's End*

December 5th
TNG 87 - *First Born* & *Bloodlines*
TNG 88 - two episodes

1995
TNG 89 - final episode

NB: DS9 dates beyond May are speculation. TNG dates are provisional according to CIC.

Coming Soon...

Just Out and March...

THE CHAMPIONS - *The Bodysnatchers/The Survivors* (video)
THE CHAMPIONS - *The Gunrunners/The Mission* (video)
3rd **DOCTOR WHO CLASSIC COMICS** 18 (£2.50)
7th DOCTOR WHO - *Ghost Light* (video)
7th DOCTOR WHO - *Arc of Infinity* (video)
7th DEEP SPACE 9 - *Warped* (KW Jeter - Hardback)
7th STAR TREK - *Sarek* (AC Crispin - Hardback)
14th THE NEW AVENGERS - *The Gladiators/Faces* (video)
17th THE NEW ADVENTURES - *Tragedy Day* (Gareth Roberts)
17th DOCTOR WHO - *Decalog* (editor - Stephen James Walker)
17th DOCTOR WHO reprint - *The Talons of Weng Chiang* (Terrance Dicks)
17th **DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE** 211 (£2.50)
17th ***The Best of THE NEXT GENERATION*** (graphic novel compilation)
21st SPACE 1999 - *A Matter of Balance/The Beta Cloud* (video)
31st **DOCTOR WHO CLASSIC COMICS** 19 (£2.50)

April

THE CHAMPIONS - *The Survivors/The Bodysnatchers* (video)
STRANGE REPORT - *4407-Heart:No Choice for the Doctor/4821-XRay: Who Weeps for the Doctor?* (video)
STRANGE REPORT - *3906-Covergirls:Last Year's Model/5055-Cult:Murder Shrieks Out* (video)
RANDALL AND HOPKIRK DECEASED - *The Smile Behind the Veil/All Work and No Pay* (video)
FIREBALL XL5/SUPERCAR - Volume One (video)
4th STAR TREK - *Patrician Transgression* (Simon Hawke)
4th ***STAR TREK Encyclopedia*** (Michael & Denise Okuda & Debbie Mirek)
4th YOUNG DEEP SPACE 9 - *Stowaways* (Brad Strickland)
11th THE NEW AVENGERS - *K is for Kill: 1-The Tiger Awakes/2-Tiger By the Tail* (video)
14th **DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE** 212 (£2.50)
21st STAR TREK reprint - *Mudd's Angels* (JA Lawrence)
21st THE NEW ADVENTURES - *Legacy* (Gary Russell)
21st DOCTOR WHO - *Paradise of Death* (Barry Letts)
25th THE AVENGERS - two Diana Rigg episodes (video)
25th THE AVENGERS - *Fog/Noon Doomsday* (video)
25th THE AVENGERS - *The Super Secret Cypher Snatch/All Done with Mirrors* (video)
25th AVENGERS signing at forbidden Planet with Linda Thorson
28th **DOCTOR WHO CLASSIC COMICS** 20 (£2.50)

May

THE CHAMPIONS - *The Mission/The Gunrunners* (video)
SPACE 1999 - *Dorzac/Devil's Planet* (video)
RANDALL & HOPKIRK DECEASED - *A Sentimental Journey/Somebody Just Walked Over My Grave* (video)
RANDALL & HOPKIRK DECEASED - *Just for the Record/The Man from Nowhere* (video)
2nd THE NEXT GENERATION - *Debtor's Planet* (Bill Thompson)
2nd DEEP SPACE NINE - *Betrayal* (Lois Tilton)
12th **DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE** 214 (£2.50)
19th THE NEW ADVENTURES - *Theatre of War* (Justin Richards)

BABYLON 5 AND TEKWAR
PREMIERE AS SCI-FI WARS HEAT UP

AS the impending departure of ratings leader STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION combines with a behind scenes tug-of-war between Paramount and Warners for control of television outlets for their nascent networks, science fiction programs continue to be brought forward as the heavy artillery for studio hopes in the cable age. Warners has added weekly episodes of BABYLON 5 to the syndication package that will become its network next season in its bid to counter Paramount's STAR TREK franchise, which will be the cornerstone of that studio's attempt to control its own network. Rather than be left on the sidelines with just SEAQUEST on NBC, Universal entered the syndication market competition with William Shatner's TEKWAR the same week.

Universal has been so pleased with the TEKWAR films that it rushed three of the four out early, running them within two months. William Shatner is now negotiating to turn TEKWAR into a weekly series next season even before the final film is seen. The three aired films have been very uneven save for good CGI throughout.

Currently, the TEKWAR films rotate with five other 2-hour programs in *The Action Pack*. Other programs in the package include KNIGHT RIDER 2010 and a new series from John Landis called FASTLINE — which will involve the discovery of an abandoned space ship. Cult director Sam Raimi will also be contributing a series called HERCULES.

William Shatner himself directed the first TEK film, and also appears on camera as the head of the Cosmos Detective Agency, the mysterious Walter Bascom. Shatner has, of course, enjoyed a considerable measure of success publishing five TEK novels set fifty years into the future and detailing the adventures of Jake Cardigan in a world dominated by cyberspace cowboys and a virtual reality drug called Tek. Tek stimulates the brain so much that virtual reality and reality become indistinguishable. It also destroys brain cells if used repeatedly.

Little was expected of TEKWAR, which was produced and filmed in Canada using a small staff of Toronto-based freelance special effects artists. However, the results achieved by Bob Munroe's team using the expensive Silicon Graphics workstations favoured by STAR TREK television and films were quite notable and the highlight of the film. Sequences of cyber jocks racing through the computer matrix in pursuit of hidden information while never leaving their keypads were highly effective, as were the traps created for them by the Matrix Police. The 3D animation work offset a campy cameo appearance by Sheena Easton as an environmental revolutionary named Warbride.

The convoluted plot involving kamikaze androids, multiple betrayals and a plasma gun also pulled up another veteran scifi face as Barry Morse (SPACE 1999) put in a brief appearance as a scientist who has discovered a way to destroy Tek. Shatner will appear as Cardigan's new boss, Bascom, in all four films. Greg Evigan (late of MY TWO DADS and BJ AND THE BEAR) abandons comedy for action with the assistance of Eugene Clark as his old partner Sid Gomez and Torri Higginson as a woman who can clear his name. Cardigan was an undercover cop apparently guilty of selling out to Tek Lord Sonny Horoki (Von Flores), resulting in the deaths of other cops. Sentenced to 15 years in cryogenic prison, he is thawed out after slightly more than 4 years due to Bascom's influence. He thinks Jake is the key to solving a problem for him. Jake wants to use Bascom's resources to find his wife - who has divorced him while he was in prison - and his son.

The high priest of cyberpunk scifi, William Gibson, makes a cameo appearance in TEK WAR, just as he had done in the ill-starred WILD PALMS. But Ron Goulart, who has worked with Shatner on all the TEK novels, also has a cameo. The Toronto staff reports that Shatner is quite open about the fact that Goulart works with him on the books and that Goulart is very appreciative of what his association with Shatner has done for his career - none of his pre-TEK novels had sold more than 25,000 copies.

After the mixed start of *TekWar*, *TekLab* was surprisingly strong, boasting a well written script from Morgan Gendel, creator of some of the best TNG and DS9 scripts, and elaborate effects as a dead person survives in the virtual reality of the computer net to take revenge.

The third entry, *TekLab*, must be seen to be disbelieved. Apparently it was rushed into production early to meet Universal's demands for another film and used a script from Westbrook Claridge that bears very little in common with the novel of the same title. In the TV version, the focus is on a battle for possession of the sword Excalibur as key to winning back the throne of England through electoral politics. The monarchy was abolished in the 1990s, and now a monarchist party is campaigning for control of the government against a party named Roundheads. The pretender to the throne is (somehow) the incongruously named Prince Albert Stewart (The name Albert being associated with the House of Saxe-Coburg/Hanover who displaced the Stuarts!). When he dies during the theft of the sword his place is taken by his son Richard Stewart (Michael York). What follows is a lot of nonsense involving over-the-hill hippies living in Battersea Power Station. Despite this slip from grace, the series potential is certainly stronger then anything else that Universal has tested in *The Action Pack*. KNIGHT RIDER 2010 bears almost no resemblance to its namesake, being instead a *Mad Max* knockoff with no Mel Gibson in sight. Look forward to a lot of racing through the desert in armoured hot rods as the good guys thwart the plots of Chrysalis Corp — a health products giant that buys carloads of illegal immigrants to use as organ donors and manufactures biomechanical replacement parts for military cybergs.

BABYLON 5

BABYLON 5 returned a year after a pilot film garnered mixed reviews and an Emmy for special effects. In choosing to premiere with an episode called *Midnight on the Firing Line*, BABYLON 5 put its fx forward, but not a strong story, which may have hurt it with casual viewers, who had difficulty figuring out what was happening. Oddly, the pilot was not rebroadcast as a direct lead into the series, perhaps because three of the actors from the pilot have been replaced, although the characters now have different names.

Without the set up of the pilot, the situation onboard the space station proved perplexing for the uninitiated. Worse, the story focused on the Centauri, who are an invitation for ridicule from non-fans. Reviews of *Midnight* in national media were unusually harsh across the board, prompting the series' creator, J. Michael Straczynski to proclaim that he was relieved because the critics are always wrong. Whether or not BABYLON 5 turns out to be *Star Bore* (as one critic intoned) the first episode proved that computer generated space battles are not enough to carry the day for many viewers. It remains to be seen how many of the opening week audience will return for more. The viewing figures appear to have been comparable to DS9's average audience, although not to DS9's stellar opening week numbers when it premiered a year ago.

The computer generated effects — including a fighter doing an instantaneous 180 degree flip to fire on a pursuer — were state of the art on the Amigas used to fire up the B5 universe (and SEAQUEST), but back in the world of mere actors the bulk of the show focused on the angst of the Centauri ambassador as he learns that the Narn have launched a surprise attack to take over a Centauri agricultural colony world called Rageesh 3. The Centauri are the most human-looking of the aliens gathered at B5, but they are also the weakest of the space empires, fallen on hard times after many years of dominating other peoples, including the up and coming Narn.

They are also the silliest looking of the aliens and act like obnoxious barflies most of the time, neither of which inspires sympathy. Ambassador Mollari has a crest of hair that stands straight up on top of his head, canines like Dracula and speaks with a Balkan accent. His new assistant is played by Stephen Furst, typecast as a buffoon since his ST ELSEWHERE days. The Ambassador seemed ever more ridiculous in undertaking two obviously doomed assaults on the Narn representative - a large lizard with a nasty temper. Any

drama featuring the Centauri may have tough going, but the worth of the series as a whole surely should not be judged without seeing more installments.

Cast changes include Claudia Christian as the new second in command, Susan Ivanova, who has an antipathy to the Psi Corp, Andrea (QUANTUM LEAP - Vietnam)Thompson as the new Psi Corp representative, Talia Winters, and Richard Biggs as Doctor Stephen Franklin. We learn that anyone discovered to have telepathic ability on Earth is given three choices - go to prison, join the Psi Corps or take powerful drugs for life to inhibit those powers.

The fifth episode, *Parliament of Dreams*, introduced Bill Mumy as Delenn's assistant, Caitlin Brown as Na'Toth, G'Kar's replacement for a mysteriously departed assistant, and Julia Nickson as Sinclair's old flame, Catherine Sakai. The sixth episode, *Mind War*, featured Walter Koenig as an unsympathetic PsiCop chasing a rogue telepath to Babylon 5. His character, Bestor, survived the encounter and is expected to return next season as the PsiCorp seems busy plotting with and without the aid of Earth militarists. The episode also introduced the possibity of another major alien species in the galaxy that far exceeds the others in power.

The seventh episode, *War Prayer*, deals with growing fear of aliens on Earth and hate crimes fostered by that fear. Among the more unexpected aspects of life on Babylon station are its size — we are told that it has 2.5 million inhabitants and is therefore the equivalent of a very large city. It seems that the grip of station security is rather uncertain at best and there is a thriving underworld life run by a being who looks like a large grasshopper. Security for the ambassadors seems amazingly lax and their staffs seem to be one person! One way the large cast is managed is that they seldom all appear in the same story. The top three human cast characters are fixtures but others may not appear at all from one week to the next.

Compared to the competition, BABYLON 5 easily becomes the crown jewel of the network. Even while the scripts have been criticised for bland dialogue involving the human characters, the visuals have been first rate. ISLAND CITY, the Prime Time Entertainment Network's latest hope, proved particularly disappointing. The pilot for this possible series makes the decidedly ho-hum TIME TRAX look like high art. Lacking budget, good actors and an interesting story, ISLAND CITY will only be remembered for allowing Kevin Conroy (the voice of the animated Batman) to be seen for a change.

But note: the more things change the more they stay the same. Although all the new series — and BABYLON 5 with strident monotony — in particular — scream foul every time they are compared to STAR TREK, that is both inevitable and a two-way street. Besides TEK WAR, William Shatner recently made a much publicised guest appearance on the SEAQUEST of the 27th February, though this ploy did little to help the ratings. The sub sunk to #44 for the week while arch-rival LOIS AND CLARK reached #21, one of its strongest showings this season. Shatner was not aided by an exceptionally peculiar script and pompous dialogue.

Playing an Eastern European dictator who had killed thousands in ethnic conflict, Shatner employed a now-you-hear-it, now-you-don't accent and lines like "bloodshed follows behind me like a wedding train." Somehow he has been dreaming about Darwin (the dolphin), as has everyone on the boat. Just what Darwin is saying is never made clear...they probably needed a mind-meld. The one treat of the evening for the TREK aficionado seems to have come when a conversion between Shatner and one of his pursuers on a large screen had the code JK NCC 1701 across the bottom of the screen - or so it is claimed. As with Walter Koenig's appearance on BABYLON 5 (and his role a narrator on its promo documentary) one has to wonder whether his association with STAR TREK had something to do with this?

Kathleen Toth

Reaction to The Other Side...

Dallas Jones
Auburn NSW Australia

Re: Kate Orman's *The Other Side* in DWB123, I'd like to clear up something which may be misinterpreted by readers. It was never the ADWFC's 'official' policy that Colin Baker should go. The only policy was the need for a new production team. Kate in her article uses information from various surveys conducted by the AWDFC over the years. I'd just like to add that in any Favourite Doctor survey the ADWFC conducted the 6th Doctor has always come either second last or last. I won't go into much detail about other aspects of the article but a few other comments are I think of interest. Kate complains that Antony Howe seems to have missed the violent bits of *Androzani* and *Resurrection*. What Kate appears to have not understood is: Tony's criticism was of the violence of the character of the 6th Doctor, not the violence in the show. DOCTOR WHO and nearly any other television show would be impossible without violence.

Kate says that fandom believes it has the power to bring the show back, but then she says fandom is not qualified to comment. Well I think Kate misses the point in what fandom is all about — if fans did not think they could change or bring the show back they would just be viewers. Kate says that fans are not qualified to comment on JN-T as a producer, but when one person **is** qualified to comment (Eric Saward) she dismisses his interview as "Ian (Levine) having a good old complain". By the way she mentions a comment in the Australian press by Australian fan Stephen Collins. What Kate doesn't know is that Stephen has worked professionally as an actor.

Kate also uses the "let's pick examples to back-up my point" style of argument, in her case with things that JN-T could not be blamed for. Unfortunately anyone can pick any example to back up any argument — it's not the examples you pick but the overall thrust that has to be looked at. In the case of Nathan-Turner it is not what has been written about the man but what hasn't.

I can't stand many Colin Baker stories but that doesn't stop me appreciating their good points. A case in point — *The Two Doctors*. I can appreciate the ideas behind the story, the pro-vegetarian stance for example, but I can only watch the first fifteen second or so (until the colour is turned on) before I have to switch it off.

Craig Wellington
Tasmania, Australia

I'd like to thank Kate Orman for her perspective from "The Other Side...". While not a great fan, or otherwise, of any particular television producer, I am a long time fan of DOCTOR WHO, and her article really struck a chord with me...

When I first encountered fandom I thought it was delightful, and truly revelled in it. This was the early Eighties, and in those days the whole world seemed to be entranced by the Doctor and his journeys. I became involved in a local fan group, we started our own fanzine (well, why not? Everybody else had one!), and met fans from all over Australia. It was true bliss. Friends and laughter, tireless discussion, and always new episodes on the horizon...

Then things changed. In 1984 the news of Peter Davison's departure after only three seasons was a great disappointment to me personally. For some reason I had assumed he would be the Doctor for a long time. This was both because I thought he was good, and getting better, as the Doctor, and because (in the back of my mind) I believed there was the need for a long and stable reign to dis-establish Tom Baker's dominance in the role. I still believe that DOCTOR WHO might be screening new episodes today if Tom Baker's successor had been in the role 5 to 7 years — but that is another story.

My disappointment at Davison's departure was compounded by the sudden alteration in the nature, or tone, of fandom. Fandom's voice was very much dominated by a certain few, and, with Davison's going, the voice seemed to lose its humour and become suddenly reactionary.

Its influence was enormous. The opinionated, anti-opinion-other-than-my-own tone of 'the voice' spread from Australian fandom's core publications, and quickly pervaded nearly all the fan literature of the period. In fact, only the West Lodge, Western Australia's fan club, seemed to be unaffected; a last bastion of good humoured Australian fandom, as it had previously existed. Through 1985 and in 1986 the charm of fandom was lost. It had become bitter. The result of this poison was the self-imposed excommunication of many fans. I am merely one of a dozen I personally know, who, having had certain rantings up to their eyeballs, got right out of fandom. True, I used pitiful excuses about being busy, bla bla bla. But the bottom line was, it had stopped being fun. Fandom was now specialising in attacking its only reason for existing. It was quite pitiful.

It has only been since mid 1992 that I've been willing to stick my toe in and test the waters again. There are still a few undercurrents, but rational debate seems to have replaced much of the reactionary, opinionated, self-righteous propaganda. Thank goodness.

After reading Kate's article, I felt impelled to write, to not just to concur that producer or era-bashing is one-eyed and pointless (because every cloud does have a strontium lining), but to thank her for reminding fandom to have some fun. It won't hurt you... promise.

On another note, having now seen *Thirty Years In The TARDIS*, I must say well done! It was excellent, informative, creative, nostalgic and fun. Thank goodness it was a succinct hour of viewing, and not three hours of rambling, tortured of fan-drenched indulgence. It was a television show both the casual viewer and DOCTOR WHO fan could enjoy, something DOCTOR WHO itself failed to be in its latter seasons. Leave the extended fan's fan version for video, and hail the televised version of *Thirty Years In The TARDIS* for its good value: as both tribute and as entertainment.

Uh-oh. I didn't like opinionated fandom, and now look what I've said!

Duncan Steele
Aberdeen

Kate Orman's piece wasn't really about JNT but more about how wonderful Australians appear to be. I don't care about fandom in Australia, or for that matter in Britain. They all seem obsessed with DOCTOR WHO. It's dead, it ain't coming back and it doesn't matter one jot to me.

As *The Green Death* concludes its run, I must say how rotten it's been. I though *Planet of the Daleks* was rotten but this was garbage.

RUMBLED?

Simon Charles Rudman
Clacton-on-Sea, Essex

Despite Kate Orman's words of wisdom earlier in this excellent issue (DWB123), Nicolle Fisher's drivel really annoyed me. After all, I have put up with Pertwee bashing for long enough and as bronze guardian of the sacred era of the Lord Pertwee (nice bit of satire don't you agree?), I feel I must reply to her vicious attack on the greatest Doctor of them all.

Let's start at the top. It is quite obvious to me that Nicolle Fisher is a pseudonym for Lancaster's finest writer and reknowned Pertwee hater — Paul Cornell, who a) hates Pertwee more than any fan in this country, b) is the finest and most brilliant writer of his generation and therefore has a unique writing style that simply cannot be copied; and c) attracted such flak for his critical review of *Terror of the Autons* that he simply couldn't contribute another article to DWB without attracting an even bigger amount of flak.

In view of the genius of Mr Cornell, his utter blindness in missing the fact that *The Green Death* has got a far better plotline then some of the stories voted more popular than this particular gem in last year's anniversary survey and that it hangs together much better than any of the McCoy stories. After all, the whole point about *The Green Death* is that it's a dire warning about handing over power to a non-human entity, which believes itself to be God and will destroy the world through pollution in pursuit of profit. Saying that, I do agree with Nicolle that the acting is lousy in places, that it's so patronising to the Welsh that I'm surprised it didn't cause the valleys to join Plaid Cymru en masse, and that the CSO is so poor I'm surprised it was ever used in the programme again!

But the resolution isn't improbable. . Any fisherman will tell you that maggots go for food like a starving man, and the only way to stop the computer was to blow it up!

Furthermore, I will support Jon Pertwee's characterisation of the Doctor to my dying breath, since I tell that if Barry Letts and Terrance Dicks hadn't gone for the maximum appeal possible in the 1970s the programme would have been cancelled in 1973, not 1989.

Finally, there aren't too many episodes in *The Green Death*, anymore than there are too many in *The Invasion*. This was one Earth-bound story which needed to be done in view of the threat to the environment perceived by Messrs Dicks and Letts.

I apologise if I have offended anybody, but Pertwee bashing is the one aspect of fan behaviour that I simply will not tolerate. Of course, if Nicolle Fisher is a real person, then I owe her a drink...

Ed: Nicole Fisher is NOT a pseudonym for Paul Cornell, who no longer lives in Lancaster anyway...

Nicolle Fisher
Lancaster

I would like to assure Simon Charles Rudman that I'm alive and well and not a NEW ADVENTURES writer. I've never been anywhere near Virgin Publishing! Paul Cornell indeed! How dare he?

VISIONS QUESTIONS...

Eric Szulczewski
Chicago USA

I was glad to see your reviewer liked Visions as much as I did. But the *Dimensions In Time* sidebar disconcerted me slightly. At the closing ceremonies, JN-T announced that £4600 had been raised, not $4600. It may have been a slip of the tongue, but the 800 pairs of glasses? I was in the Friday night audience, and everyone in the audience had a pair of glasses. The hall used for *Dimensions* sat more than 1000, and was virtually full. And I noticed that the Saturday night group had glasses as well. So where did the glasses come from? Like your source, I saw the infamous box of glasses being removed from the area. Could there be a Visionsgate here? And as for "admitted free of charge", the word "admission" was used in the schedule. This, to me, implies that no one was let into the showing without being charged $5. More unusual info: according to friends attending the Saturday showing, the total was also announced at that time. That was an awfully quick count. And the delay in showing *Dimensions* on Saturday made me wonder if there was a third showing...

MYTH MAKERS CORRECTION

Keith Barnfather
Reeltime Productions

It's always a pleasure to read Robert Cope's reviews of the *Myth Makers* range because I find his views, which don't always agree with mine, are well thought out and constructive. For example, his description of Barry Letts and Terrance Dick' *Myth Makers* as a "warm, jolly video" I felt summed the production up - but whereas he suggested we should "abandon the studio and get them into a nicer setting" for a sequel, I firmly believe it would have been impossible to have that warm, jolly video anywhere other than a studio! Oh well, such is life...

However, I'm actually dropping you this line to correct an error. The soundtrack to Louise Jameson's Myth Makers was by Mark Ayres, not Ian Salmon. Not perhaps a very important point - but we must keep these artistic types happy.

Following on along that line, I was very pleased to read Robert's comments in praise of Nick Briggs. I certainly wouldn't want to be re-incarnated as Nick (having me as an employer would be purgatory), but I certainly consider Nick as a great and undervalued actor/presenter who deserve a much wider outlet for his undoubted talent — as long as he can continue with Myth Makers!

It's us producers who never get any credit.....

Finally, I'd just like to say thank you to anyone still reading this letter who buys *Myth Makers* (are you mad?). Without the support from everyone that purchases the series I wouldn't have had some of the funniest, happiest and certainly most ludicrous times of my life.

MISSING EPISODES?

Richard Develyn
Hastings

I write in reply to Nigel Windsor (in DWB124), the gentleman who works for Television New Zealand, who stated at the end of his letter that: "It is highly unlikely that a respected and efficient broadcaster such as TVNZ would hold programmes for which it no longer held rights."

Being one of those people involved in the pursuit and recovery of missing episodes it worries me that any employee of any TV station should make the association between holding old episodes and inefficient operation. I am sure that Peter Brierly in his original letter never meant to make that suggestion, equally I am sure that Nigel Windsor does not seek to imply unprofessionalism of any TV station which has in the past recovered material.

Nobody underestimates the difficulties every TV station in the world has in maintaining and cataloguing their film and video archives. Mistakes are made, thank goodness, since this is the way that missing episodes are found. Respected and efficient broadcasters such as the BBC made mistakes in destroying material back in the 70s, which is how the majority of DOCTOR WHO black and white episodes now exist.

I labour the point a little because I know that there is some amateur searching going on in New Zealand, amongst other countries. My "nightmare" scenario is that missing episodes are found but then destroyed, rather than returned, because of the misconception that it would reflect badly on the TV station involved. Nothing could be further from the truth. As witnessed by previous recoveries, the BBC, to say nothing of the fans, are overjoyed when lost episodes are found.

A Laignel
Jersey

I have to wonder what the BBC are actually doing to recover more lost gems. It seems precious little. Where are the pleas for lost episodes on video sleeves, the jackets for Missing Story tapes... Why screen a five minute documentary on missing episodes without giving an address and a non-prosecution guarantee at the end? So much for the much vaunted lost episodes office!

You don't think that the BBC might be worried about the general public learning of their past negligence? *Tomb* was 'lost', not 'destroyed as being of no commercial value'. Copies of STEPTOE were found in the writers' basement. What happened to the originals, I wonder...

Now is the time to write to BBC Enterprises, demanding more action on episode recovery. *Tenth Planet 4* went missing and we know *The Feast of Steven* was never junked. These episodes alone stand a chance of being somewhere

Niall Turner
Winchester

DWB124 was a good one — George Lucas's article was stunning, a eulogy for WHO. The letters page was also good, for throwing some perspective on that reliable standby, the *Lost Episodes Rumour Mill*. I was particularly glad to see Nigel Windsor's matter of fact information. If you're a fan of Sixties WHO then lost episode rumours are one of the most frustrating aspects of being

a fan. There really have been some gob-smacking inanities over the years: *Marco Polo* is somewhere in Canada, Someone high up in fandom has a complete copy of *The Highlanders*... Brilliant. What next? Lord Lucan spotted watching *The Macra Terror* on the Moon?

Personally, I think there are a few more episodes waiting to be found, and by 2004 I'm sure another dozen or so will have turned up. So yes, keep looking, but no more "I have it on good authority they're all under Ian Levine's bed" etc...

In the meantime we might have a new series to look forward to. Michael Crawford would be inspired casting in my opinion. In fact, with a new series and both NEW and MISSING ADVENTURE, more WHO is in fandom's hands then it's ever been...

RE-RELEASES CUT?

John Pettigrew
Fife

Finding the re-released "complete and un-edited" BBC Videos, my first thoughts were "Oh yeah, BBC Video out to make a quick buck." I mean look at them — apart from incredibly small differences to the outside packaging, there was no attempt to actually relaunch the tapes. Why bother spending money on new covers or even rewriting the back cover blurb when they know that every fan who possibly can will buy a second copy so they have a complete, pristine edition? What mugs we are! So anyway, I arrived home with *Pyramids, Day* and *Ark*. Well, how could I resist them at that price? Sad man. I quickly zoomed through *Pyramids* and *Ark* just to make sure that I hadn't been cheated and been given duff tapes (the copyright year wasn't 1994 after all). Sure enough, the cliffhangers remained with the crashing accompaniment of the distinctive theme. Great! I settled down to watch *The Ark in Space* and I don't know if it was just an illusion but the four episodes seemed to be choc-full of material that had been cut out. At last I was watching the whole of this story for the first time since it was originally broadcast. And it was brilliant, although there was one nagging little niggle which I couldn't quite put my finger on... Shrugging my shoulders, I later decided to revel in that Pertwee classic, *Day of the Three Daleks*. Approximately 25 mins later the second episode began and **Hold on, what's this?** After the recap I definitely heard the beginning of the closing theme! I fast forwarded to the start of the third episode **and the same thing happened again!** Cynical doubts filled my mind. Surely BBC Video hadn't simply chopped the original video into four bits and edited on the closing credits? Surely not? And then the nagging little niggle about *The Ark in Space* returned sharply — the strange scene where the infected Noah comes face to face with the Doctor and Vira. Now in the original video release I assumed a cut (to obtain a U certificate) explained the strange jump where Noah suddenly vanishes as a gun falls to the floor. But lo and behold it's still there on the 'new and complete' version. Hmmm.

So come on — what's the story? Are the new versions really the original episodes or are they still hacked to bits and — in the case of *Day of the Daleks* — clumsily edited into four episodes or what?

Ed: They are (I believe) the original episodes. The disconcerting echo of the theme howl on the recaps was there on the original transmission of Day of the Daleks, while The Ark in Space non-sequitor is a cut — but one Philip Hinchcliffe insisted upon prior to the 1975 screening, after he decided the original edit was too disturbing for transmission...

John Hudson
Tyne and Wear

The Deadly Assassins was spot on in its examination of DOCTOR WHO's strengths and the reason for its decline. A "bold, scintillating return by the Doctor" *is* what is needed, and the choice of actor for the title role is going to be immensely difficult. At least Amblin should have the resources to pay a really good, experienced actor - I can't help thinking that salary must have been an element in the casting of the last couple of TV Doctors. The programme's new producers need to have lots of imagination, looking at performers of the calibre of John Hurt and Derek Jacobi. If they insist on an American, maybe Christopher Lloyd or Robin Williams... I really don't know: I just hope the new producer has more common sense than JNT in his latter years.

Obviously the choice of producer and script editor are also crucial. It all brings to mind the parallel between Margaret Thatcher and John Nathan-Turner. In Thatcher's first few years of power there seemed to be a consensus (incidentally, not shared by me) that she was what the country needed — a single-minded figure determined on change. Similarly, the changes rung by JNT were initially acclaimed. Like Thatcher, JNT in time became arrogant and self-satisfied: both of them came to feel they were infallible. As the cliche goes, pride lies before a fall, and they were both eventually ousted. When Thatcher was kicked out, there was no clear successor, and so we got John Major. Now we have the situation where the government is certainly no better, just different. I hate to say it, but the same thing could happen with DOCTOR WHO. I hope not. If the revived program was going to be as bad as the final Colin Baker season or any of the McCoy travesties, then better for it to stay dead and buried.

Tim Baron
Lincoln

I am writing in defence of QUANTUM LEAP's *Deliver Us From Evil*, criticised in DWB120 and now screened by BBC2. Firstly, rejecting an idea in QUANTUM LEAP because it "just holds no water" means you would pretty much have to scrap the entire series. The whole issue of Sam's leapings has always been pretty vague but that never really mattered, and to enjoy the show you just have to hand in your disbelief at the door, sit back and watch. The notion of an 'Evil Leaper' is an imaginative one, and it works well. The moment when Alia mauls herself to frame Sam is genuinely chilling.

As to why Alia is leaping and why she must do wrong, you only have to listen to the desperate conversation between Alia and Zoey to realise that, whatever their origin, the pair are in the service of something Evil, that to reach the stage they are at now ('Family wrecking and adultery') they have had to "claw [their] way out of Hell" chiefly, it seems, through Alia performing many terrible deeds ("I don't want to have to kill all those people again"). So it isn't all spelt out and underlined, so what? Sam's leaps are only 'explained' in the last episode of the series, so not explaining everything at once is hardly without precedent — and not just in QUANTUM LEAP. In STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION'S *The Neutral Zone*, you don't find out who made those craters until half way through the next season (*Q Who*). Not having all the answers at once in a continuing series adds suspense and mystery, and I applaud the QUANTUM LEAP team for trying it.

All the same, it's a shame that the baddie turns out to be a woman again. The sole regular, positive, 'female' is Ziggy!

Two Appeals for Support

Andy McKinney
Brodhead USA

You can now add the Sci-Fi Channel to the casualty list on the DOCTOR WHO front. According to *Satellite ORBIT*, "DOCTOR WHO is to be replaced this week with THE HITCHHIKER!

As most American fans know, THE HITCHHIKER is a show that began on HBO as a poorly scripted "adult" (naked women and gore) TWILIGHT ZONE. After three lack-lustre seasons, it was resurrected on the USA Cable Network. Gone was the profanity and nudity, but in their place were even worse scripts. Why would Sci-Fi even think of replacing DOCTOR WHO with such a mess?

Well, for a start, it's probably a lot cheaper to air THE HITCHHIKER, because USA owns the Sci-Fi Channel, so there's no huge syndication fee to pay. I also suspect that poor ratings are also to blame, but this is the fault of the Sci-Fi Channel itself. DOCTOR WHO has run in a six-day strip since the channel was born. In their advertisements and press releases, the channel boasted that it would show all the episodes (from complete stories) in uncut form. Also, in the earliest releases, they were supposed to begin with Hartnell and show all the doctors except Pertwee and Tom Baker, due to some licensing arrangement.

When the channel premiered, the first story shown was, to my disappointment, *Robot* and, the day after *Power of Kroll* finished, *Robot* started again! I immediately wrote a letter to the channel, telling them of their mistake, and how it wouldn't endear them to the fan community. I never received a reply. Worse, the jump from *Kroll* to *Robot* happened twice more!

Only one non-Baker story was shown on Sci-Fi, *The Five Doctors*, shown on their so-called 30th Anniversary celebration. When I heard of this event, I thought that all of the x-doctor stories will be shown in the three-day event. Instead, we get six showings of *The Five Doctors*, K-9 & COMPANY, and *Making of Silver Nemesis*. Some celebration...

Sci-Fi even went back on their promise to air the episodes uncut. Episodes of *Pyramids of Mars* and *The Brain of Morbius* had bits cut and American-voiced "teasers" inserted between the titles and the episode proper. A complete waste of time (the teasers often showed the most climatic moments and would ruin any surprise for new viewers).

(Ed: I suspect these are the 'cut-for-commercials' prints produced when these stories were first shown in the States in the late Seventies, as I saw such a version of The Brain of Morbius screened in San Francisco in '89)

As shabby as Sci-Fi Channel's treatment has been, the Doctor needs the Sci-Fi Channel. If a new series is dependent on American co-production, the old series needs all of the exposure it can get. Why would investors pay money to revive a show that isn't even syndicated on a nationwide basis (I wonder if there are even any PBS stations carrying the show, since their contracts were supposedly to expire in '92). From a business standpoint, would you blame them?

Therefore, I'm appealing to all fans of the show, American and otherwise, to write letters to Sci-Fi Channel and voice your disappointment at the show being taken from the air. English viewers need only show how popular the Doctor is on the video charts in England.

If you do write, please try to keep the letters polite and to the point. Tell them that the Tom Baker-only strategy is doomed, since most U.S. fans have already seen his episodes countless times beforehand, and probably have them taped. Point out that, with the large number of transmittable episodes, they have a great opportunity for fewer repeats (just how many times can one show BATTLESTAR GALACTICA without the audience going elsewhere?). If the Doctor is to have any future in the United States, sad to say, the Sci-Fi Channel is probably the only hope (let's face it, the videos don't sell terribly well here).

The address is: Sci-Fi Channel, Programming Department, 1230 Avenue of the Americans, New York, NY 10020

Remember, the Doctor needs your help!

Mark Chaloner for Who-UK
328 Flixton Road, Flixton, Urmston, Manchester M41 5QF

As I am sure you are aware, a co-production deal with *Amblin Entertainment* in America has either been signed or is close to being signed. There are rumours the show will either be made here or in America, and that among the actors being considered for the part of the Doctor are Richard O'Brien and Michael Crawford. Some fans are very excited at the prospect of this, but it could be seen as a very messy death for the programme. The possible implication for an American co-production is that the show would have to be networked in America, and its chances of survival in the cut-throat world of American television are virtually nil — we would be lucky if it lasted two years. Spielberg's track record on television is not particularly encouraging either. Two shows of any particular note, AMAZING STORIES and SEAQUEST DSV, both cancelled after one series. Even assuming it was a big success can you really see Amblin co-financing the show for another thirty years. Any return for the show as an American co-production would be short-lived, and there would be no chance of the show returning after that. If the BBC insists on some sort of co-production it should be with a British independent — at least that way the show could have a future.

If you agree with all of the above send a letter to the BBC raising these points and tell them that you support *Who-UK*. Also ask all your local group members who agree to do the same. I am also attempting to contact American fans, some of whom I hear are also unhappy with the idea of Spielberg's involvement. They confirm the show is very unlikely to survive in America. After all, it's the Britishness of the show that appeals to them and that simply cannot be copied.

Having raised the production values of the series with a co-production the BBC's argument - once it's been cancelled - will be that it's too expensive to ever make again, as happened with THE AVENGERS.

Now it's up to the fans to look after the show. No one else will.

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Classifieds — £3.95 for up to 45 words

The Way Back

As BLAKE'S 7 returns to the BBC for the first time in ten years, Barbara Barrett recalls her personal reactions to the series first time round...

WHEN BLAKE'S 7 was first broadcast I'd long ago deserted telefantasy (including, gasp!, DOCTOR WHO) in favour of 'hard' SF novels. Compared to SF novels, telefantasy seemed to me to be shallow, always outdated, and unoriginal in its ideas. I'd come to the conclusion that telefantasy just couldn't do Science Fiction justice — even in pure adventure yarns written only for entertainment.

The pre-broadcast hype about BLAKE'S 7 being Britain's answer to STAR TREK, and knowing that Terry Nation was its creator, put me off. Oh no, not he of Daleks fame: (Animated pepper pots? — I was going through my 'I've outgrown all that kid's stuff' stage). In spite of that I decided I'd give it a chance, but was very sceptical that it'd be anything to write home about.

However, it was, and BLAKE'S 7 changed my ideas and got me right back into telefantasy: it proved to me that telefantasy could be good, original, moving, and multi-dimensional. It was clear right from episode one that this was going to be different from anything I'd ever seen before.

From *The Way Back* through to *Cygnus Alpha* formed an integrated whole, each episode building and developing on the one before (allowing for a movie-like depth) yet able to stand by themselves as yarns: this was very exciting and different from STAR TREK, where every episode stood alone, and from DOCTOR WHO's serialised stories. I know Nation had done this before with SURVIVORS, but I hadn't seen that, so it was all new to me.

BLAKE'S 7 wasn't the 'monster of the week' kind of thing I'd expected. What really impressed me was the depth of the visualisation of the future-society and the characterisation: this was the first time in an SF TV series that I'd seen people so well done that I could imagine meeting them in real life, in a future universe I was able to really believe in without my innate cynical scepticism niggling away while I watched. The fact that it took several episodes for the 'seven' to be completed only added to my enjoyment and the series' believability. In truth I think it is fair to say that BLAKE'S 7 began more as a drama that just happened to be set in the future and involved spaceships, than as an SF TV show.

The Beginning: Blake faces his judges in The Way Back (©BBC Video)

Gareth Thomas' Blake might have been the official 'star' but Paul Darrow's Avon and Micheal Keating's Vila were just as prominent in the action, and their characters soon had a place in my affections (and dare I admit that Avon entered my fantasies too — I'd never have expected that of the UNIT Captain from *Doctor Who and the Silurians!*). The inter-reaction of that trio had all the confrontation and conflict needed for good drama. DS9 could learn a lot from BLAKE'S 7 when it comes to characters sparking off each other.

The computers — Zen and, especially, the grouchy Orac — were pure magic. These computers had personality, gender, and although special effects were used to give an 'artificial' lilt to their voices their sound was very different from the stilted, soulless, computers of STAR TREK (the 'female' voice of the original Enterprise's computer came across as very genderless) and that helped make BLAKE'S 7 seem very original and fresh. And ahead of its time, as their successors in STAR COPS and QUANTUM LEAP have shown...

The sets were a bit naff at times — they wobbled and they looked like TV studio sets — and the special effects of the Liberator sometimes seemed to have been done with cardboard cut-outs, but BLAKE'S 7 had a tangible atmosphere that sucked me in so completely that I didn't notice the flaws, or care when I did. Atmosphere was an important part of BLAKE'S 7's mystique. Moody tales like *Duel* and *Sarcophagus* and awe inspiring ones like *Terminal*, where Zen's poignant "I'm sorry" left me in tears.

My favourite episode was, and still is, *Trial*. That episode really made me feel that the universe which Blake and crew inhabited was strange, vast, and complex. On the one hand Zil and its living planet — there, in a few lines of dialogue, we were plunged into a strange culture and ecology very effectively; on the other hand the intrigues going on at Servalan's headquarters — another multi-layered society that seemed very real. *Trial* was also a good example of the kind of character development that I came to expect and love in BLAKE'S 7. Blake goes walkabout, leaving the Liberator crew behind so he can do some private soul-searching — he doubts his own actions, questioning his motives, searching for answers to moral questions. The central hero having doubts about the very things that made him the hero? Now that, to the best of my knowledge, had never been done on a mere SF TV show before.

And principal (male) villain Travis was given a depth in *Trial* that was unusual for SF telefantasy of the time. Frankly I don't think that section of *Trial* would have been quite as effective if Steven Grief had still been Travis — Brian Croucher gets my vote for the better Travis (he was certainly the sexiest!).

BLAKE'S 7 had quite a few concepts that I found very interesting; good examples were the Puppet Masters and the two societies who settled their wars by single combat. But it's a pity that the female characters (apart from Servalan and, very occasionally, Cally) never got much of a look in on the development front. Jenna, Dayna, and the dreadful Soolin, seemed to only be around to show a bit of T&A.

But the cracks began to show after *Star One* and the strong continuity of the series was lost. It wasn't just the replacement of Jenna with Dayna and Blake with Tarrant, it was the inaccurate back-references and inconsistencies of logic. Publicity, so pervasive that it seemed to become series reality, held that Servalan was eventually 'blamed' for the war by the Federation, but the attack, unprovoked in any case,

Season Two: Blake and his crew inspect their new acquisition, Orac... (©BBC Video)

was underway before her take-over... Isolationism seemed to reign throughout the galaxy, yet it would have been more logical, after such a massive outside threat and because the aliens still existed (it was only their invasion fleet that'd been destroyed) for the galaxy to unite against a common threat — a threat which disconcertingly disappeared **immediately** after the crucial battle. Rebels and Federation had fought on the same side and the after effects of that cooperation should have been profound, not non-existent.

I became quite disillusioned with BLAKE's 7 in the third series, but it wasn't all bad — there were some good episodes in there, culminating in season three's best: *Terminal*. But season four really seemed the pits. Servalan became a nympho, Vila a clown, Avon went way, way OTT, and the stories became less and less plausible. The costumes became very *Buck Rogers/ Flash Gordon*. And one of the little details I'd liked about Blake's 7, that helped its believability — the central characters changed their clothes occasionally, both blokes and girls, Avon having some really nice gear up to series three — vanished completely.

Scorpio, touted as being so very different from the Liberator, soon became a poor man's Liberator instead of having its own unique capabilities. Slave was a Zen substitute, and a teleporter and a 'faster than what the Federation's got' stardrive were soon added. Scorpio had some of the Liberator's abilities and none of its glamour. I stopped watching then, until I heard that Blake would return in the final episode. *Blake* started well, and was a good story with lots of potential, but that ending: arrrggghh! I was hoping, of course, that the Federation Troopers had only stunned, not killed, the crew and that BLAKE's 7 would return, building on the story threads laid down in *Blake*, but it was not to be.

BLAKE's 7 got me back into telefantasy, and that had a profound effect on my life. Through SF TV fandom I've met good friends (and lovers — although I wouldn't call all of them good!). I've formed bonds with people in other countries and cultures that I wouldn't otherwise have had. I've been introduced to new ideas and new influences (like Japanese and Chinese language, culture, art, and food). So while BLAKE's 7 itself didn't change my life, the side-effects it had on me **did**. If it hadn't been for BLAKE's 7 many of the rich experiences of my life wouldn't have happened. Like, I mean, all this plus hours of couch-potatoing too, what more could a girl ask for? (Wealth, power, fame, good looks, toy-boys, a Labour Government, and a slim waistline spring to mind!).

Redemption - Blake (Gareth Thomas) and Avon (Paul Darrow), guarded by the Liberator's mysterious owners... (©BBC Video)

Since BLAKE's 7 came out on video I've rewatched the whole four series and I enjoyed it, and loathed it, as much the second time around as I did the first. It'll be great to see it again on BBC2. Enjoy!

Barbara Barrett

Nicolle Fisher Speaks Out!

The mouth they cannot gag on the BLAKE repeats...

SO, IT'S FINALLY HAPPENING.

Isn't it? We shall see. And seeing will be believing. The last time I heard this rumour was about five years ago in the Ealing Pizza Hut with what was then the West London Local Group. I believed the rumour then. I'm older and wiser and I don't believe it now, in spite of our editor's assurances. Nevertheless I must concede that it has the ring of truth. After all, let's look at the evidence. The series has just been completely released on BBC Video. Fans have just spent (according to a rough mental calculation) over £250 on something that they could now get for (again) a quarter of that price. A decent video machine will record at no appreciably inferior quality to the Beeb's commercial releases.

But all this is sad and tragic talk. Let us merely observe that the same thing happened with FAWLTY TOWERS and with THE BLACK ADDER, although those series have been repeated so often that anyone who now buys the Beeb releases is a damn fool who deserves to be out of pocket.

Damn fools are much in evidence in BLAKE's 7. John Abineri, Julian Glover, T.P. McKenna... all appear as damn fools of one sort or another, and with so many damn fools washing about it would be a damn fool who believed these repeats were actually going ahead until she saw them. After all, a lot of people believed in *The Dark Dimension* and look what happened to that... (Personally, I'd go for *Dimensions in Time* on every turn - a great laugh). And it will be April. April the first, in fact, if rumour's to be believed! Maybe there are April fools as well as damn fools. And maybe there's Strawberry Fool as well.

"I really would suggest that you don't delay the repeats any further – I might be displeased."
Jacqueline Pearce as She Who Must Be Obeyed - Servalan (©BBC Video)

Lashings of it up there on the sixth floor when they think these things out. Or is it Cow's Hoof Mould? Asterix would love us.

In any event we may be kidding ourselves that anyone's going to watch it. After all, nobody bought the SURVIVORS videos, did they? And the plummeting figures for *The Green Death* demonstrate how little that impressed anybody. On the other hand though loads of people remember SURVIVORS it's in a different genre. Not one where people are so obsessed that they go and shell out piles of dosh with reckless abandon. And the chances of SURVIVORS being repeated are less than negligible. Aren't they? Or does the fact that it's just been put out on video have transmission implications? SURVIVORS never got one single repeat. Under half of BLAKE's 7 has ever been repeated. Perhaps in these days of endless DOCTOR WHO repeats we should believe anything.

BBC Policy changes more often than the weather. The BBC is more sympathetic to science fiction than it was. But do we need their sympathy? Why do we need an on-going or repeated programme to give us a purpose? We've survived without BLAKE's 7 for over ten years. Why do we need it back now? I've just watched *Gambit* on video and, wonderfully camp as it is, it's looking a bit creaky. Why make it a nostalgia item when people still think of it as a recent series? All times are not the same. Give it another ten years please. And in the meantime we can develop the technology to fiddle with the tapes and change Vila's hairstyle into something more plausible.

Unless of course he's back in fashion by 2004 In which case, God help us.

Nicolle Fisher

Blake's 7 Series Survey

Season by Season

Season One

The Way Back	80.94%
Space Fall	74.41%
Project Avalon	73.86%
Duel	72.93%
Seek-Locate-Destroy	72.49%
Orac	69.88%
Cygnus Alpha	61.76%
The Web	61.73%
Mission to Destiny	58.99%
Deliverance	57.86%
Breakdown	55.85%
Bounty	53.59%
Time Squad	51.92%
Season Average	**65.09%**

Season Two

Star One	87.41%
Gambit	82.32%
Shadow	74.91%
Killer	74.57%
Trial	74.00%
Pressure Point	72.24%
Weapon	67.97%
Redemption	67.78%
Countdown	66.84%
Hostage	54.53%
Voice from the Past	52.60%
Horizon	51.45%
The Keeper	48.92%
Season Average	**67.35%**

Season Three

Terminal	89.01%
Rumours of Death	85.47%
City at the Edge of the World	82.65%
Sarcophagus	77.46%
Deathwatch	76.66%
Aftermath	74.77%
Powerplay	73.09%
Children of Auron	72.69%
The Harvest of Kairos	54.80%
Ultraworld	51.30%
Moloch	51.30%
Volcano	45.15%
Dawn of the Gods	40.87%
Season Average	**67.51%**

Season Four

Blake	89.97%
Orbit	83.38%
Sand	78.20%
Gold	76.64%
Rescue	72.05%
Games	68.38%
Headhunter	67.91%
Assassin	66.33%
Traitor	58.60%
Warlord	56.06%
Power	54.71%
Stardrive	44.43%
Animals	32.37%
Season Average	**65.31%**

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	Episode	Score	V:	S:	(B-W)
1	Blake	89.97%	306	4	(1-26)
2	Terminal	89.01%	294	3	(5-51)
3	Star One	87.41%	292	2	(4-51)
4	Rumours of Death	85.47%	286	3	(7-47)
5	Orbit	83.38%	281	4	(15-33)
6	City at the Edge of the World	82.65%	281	3	(21-49)
7	Gambit	82.32%	284	2	(19-34)
8	The Way Back	80.94%	319	1	(2-24)
9	Sand	78.20%	280	4	(24-18)
10	Sarcophagus	77.46%	280	3	(8-30)
11	Deathwatch	76.66%	268	3	(33-38)
12	Gold	76.64%	283	4	(38-14)
13	Shadow	74.91%	285	2	(16-23)
14	Aftermath	74.77%	287	3	(6-37)
15	Killer	74.57%	278	2	(20-36)
16	Space Fall	74.41%	315	1	(12-42)
17	Trial	74.00%	279	2	(17-28)
18	Project Avalon	73.86%	294	1	(11-43)
19	Powerplay	73.09%	280	3	(22-46)
20	Duel	72.93%	299	1	(3-45)
21	Children of Auron	72.69%	284	3	(30-39)
22	Seek-Locate-Destroy	72.49%	299	1	(10-41)
23	Pressure Point	72.24%	281	2	(23-27)
24	Rescue	72.05%	297	4	(27-20)
25	Orac	69.88%	300	1	(9-31)
26	Weapon	67.97%	281	2	(29-12)
27	Headhunter	67.91%	278	4	(25-15)
28	Redemption	67.78%	293	2	(13-10)
29	Countdown	66.84%	275	2	(46-50)
30	Games	68.38%	275	4	(41-22)
31	Assassin	66.33%	275	4	(40-44)
32	Cygnus Alpha	61.76%	309	1	(18-13)
33	The Web	61.73%	292	1	(14-16)
34	Mission to Destiny	58.99%	287	1	(26-3)
35	Traitor	58.60%	272	4	(35-39)
36	Deliverance	57.86%	287	1	(28-19)
37	Warlord	56.06%	282	4	(45-6)
38	Breakdown	55.85%	282	1	(37-17)
39	The Harvest of Kairos	54.80%	270	3	(49-8)
40	Power	54.71%	278	4	(35-11)
41	Hostage	54.53%	275	2	(52-48)
42	Bounty	53.59%	274	1	(31-2)
43	Voice from the Past	52.60%	279	2	(44-29)
44	Time Squad	51.92%	302	1	(32-7)
45	Horizon	51.45%	276	2	(43-5)
46	Ultraworld	51.30%	262	3	(34-25)
47	Moloch	51.30%	262	3	(50-21)
48	The Keeper	48.92%	278	2	(42-40)
49	Volcano	45.15%	264	3	(51-9)
50	Stardrive	44.43%	271	4	(36-4)
51	Dawn of the Gods	40.87%	259	3	(47-32)
52	Animals	32.37%	266	4	(48-1)

Score: Average rating given by voters; V: Number of voters rating each episode; S: Season; (B-W): Positions in Best and Worst Episode listings according to last poll (DWB97).

Well regarded, at number twelve – Roy Kinnear and Paul Darrow in Gold (©BBC Video)

Still the most popular episode – A scarred Blake faces his doom... (©BBC Video)

THE LAST time we conducted this survey, back in 1991, a little less than half of Blake's 7 was available on video... The early, Gareth Thomas, episodes of the series would have been fresh in voters' minds...the later episodes less so, unless they'd made a particular impact when originally shown. That probably had an effect on the eventual results, with the later episodes inclined to appear low down in **both** the *classic* and the *turkeys* listings, simply because no-one remembered them... In which case, we ought to be able to see some changes this time round...

And we can. The controversial final episode *Blake* still takes the place of honour, though its' equally depressing predecessor *Terminal* has risen to snap at its heels. But look at *City at the Edge of the World* and *Duel*, who've almost swapped positions, as *Duel* drops 17 places to 20th, and *City* rises 15, to 6th. Equally impressive is the fall of *Orac*, previously ninth but now within an inch of dropping into the bottom half of the table.

In fact, a consistent feature of the results is the decline in season one's popularity. In 1991, the first series took almost half the places in the top ten — now, only *The Way Back* remains, at number nine. In part this could be due to video fatigue, as the episodes now dominating the upper reaches of the table are almost without exception complex pieces, which merit repeated viewing...

One surprise is the rise of the much maligned *The Harvest of Kairos*, up to 39th place where it out-rates cult favourites such as *Power* and *Horizon* (well, the Avon fans love them...), not to mention no fewer than ***four*** other third season episodes! A case perhaps of a bad reputation acting in favour of a story which is still pretty bad, all things considered...? Otherwise the lower reaches of the table are much as might be expected: every Allan Prior script is placed in the bottom dozen, with *Animals* a dead cert to take the wooden spoon almost from day one...

Within each season the ordering is much as might have been expected, with only the relative ratings of the seasons really in flux. Season one proves watchable at its worst, with its least popular episode coming in above 50%, but (as the later seasons show), you have to accept a few turkeys if you want classics you can watch and watch again...

But note this...the average ratings for each season are so close as to be almost identical. Seasons three takes the top slot by a whisker, its well regarded episodes more than making up for its early turkeys, but while season four still comes in last, it almost matches season one... but will that be reflected in the 'least favourite season' category, or will the final run still win that by a mile... Well, we'll see next month, won't we?

SO TOUGH

A backwards interview with Peter Tuddenham

Cigarette, cup of tea, a bun...

"I'm no Shakespearian actor." Peter stares with melancholy resignation into his almost empty glass of lemonade. *"I'll never play Lear or Hamlet."*

We are in the hotel bar at a convention. Fans bustle about. Some stop to glance at us before moving on. Far be it from me, I decide, gazing into my own drink, to comment upon Tuddenham's assessment. In any case, he seems content to confirm it himself. *"I wouldn't want to anyway,"* he attests. *"I'm more of an Esmonde and Larbey man.* THE GOOD LIFE *and all that. That seems to be what I'm most associated with."*

I nod sympathetically. And what's wrong with comedy? A long and noble tradition if ever there was one. *"I did an Esmonde and Larbey pilot in '88.* DOUBLE FIRST *it was called. There was going to be a second series but it never happened. Still, that's the BBC for you."*

Ain't that just so true? And before that he was clambering around snowy beams in the tower of a Norfolk church.

"Don't remind me!" Peter laughs and empties his drink. After getting another one he laughs again at the memory. *"Peter Wimsey it was, with Ian Carmichael and the legendary Peter Jones. We were teaching this girl to ring the bells because it was The Nine Tailors. Marvellous. It was freezing cold and there was snow coming through the slats. This is my lot! Teaching. Dialect coaching is another thing. I do an awful lot of that; mainly East Anglian."*

In my pig-ignorance I was not aware that there was such a distinctive dialect, but apparently there is. Suffolk, too, as Peter reveals that he has also been known to teach opera singers to do *Peter Grimes* with a Suffolk dialect. None of this for the monotonic Zen, even supposing he could be reconstituted. *"But,"* Tuddenham insists, *"Orac could still come back."*

Yeah, right on.

"I think people would like to see it come back. I know some people say the sets were a bit wobbly and so on but I think it would create a new young audience. Like the old Hancock's which were popular in those days. And look what's happened with THUNDERBIRDS."

I glance out through the window. It is time, I decide, for a hopelessly fannish question. There doesn't seem to be any other way of broaching the subject. How was it, I ask, that he ended up playing Slave as well as Orac and the late, lamented Zen?

"It was always going to be me. They just phoned up and said they'd got a new computer and would I do it? I said yes. They said he had to be apologetic and cringing, which was a bit odd, and I didn't get anything like the response to Slave snuffing it as Zen snuffing it, but then it was the last episode and ***everybody*** *snuffed it."*

And wasn't the last season a bit duff anyway? A little indelicate, that, but Peter doesn't seem to mind. *"That's true, but Paul or Michael could tell you more about it. You see I was only involved for about three rehearsal days so I didn't really get into the heart of it, except when I was doing my own thing. I was not aware of what was happening in any great depth, which they were because they were playing more. As far as I was concerned I was quite happy with my bit; I didn't have any trouble at all. I think the others had one or two problems with theirs, but actually I thought the last season was okay."*

Well, that last one didn't sound too furious.

My observation that all of Peter's computers had distinctive characters caused him to raise his eyebrows. Surely the comment wasn't that brainless? Apparently not, as Peter suggests. *"As soon as they had found the voice they had a better idea of what the character would be like. That certainly was the case with Orac who was supposed to be played by Derek Farr. He was asked to continue but didn't want to do it. There was an impasse. They wanted Orac as a computer to continue in the series, though nothing was written. They wanted a contrast to Zen but no longer had Derek Farr, so after a bit of umm-ing and ah-ing they asked me if I would step in. I heard Derek's version and copied it as far as I could then changed it a bit to make it a bit more irascible. They liked the idea of that fussy little character so I was lucky to do that really. I tried to make it as different from Zen as I could."*

I never take my hat off except when I'm out of doors.

Presumably, I put it to Peter as yet another glass reaches that desperate state known only as 'needing refilling', he had done voice-work prior to appearing on BLAKE'S 7. Was this why he was cast?

"I'd done commercial voice overs. I did one for Galaxy and presented Daz where I was just seen in the background asking housewives how they felt about their washing powder."

No way. He has to be kidding. He did that kind of nonsense.

"I'm afraid so. And it still goes on. They never saw my face because I had my back to the camera. That was the great thing. I also advertised Nelson cigarettes and I don't even smoke. I think I did about thirteen films for them and no-one on the executive side knew that I didn't smoke. Never have. I had to for the films but I didn't take it up afterwards. Maybe they didn't care. Radio came along quite by chance. When I was in the army I did stand up comedy for radio. For Zen I was just cast as an actor who was going to do it, not as a voice specialist, though Vere Lorrimer knew I could do voices. He rang me up, said he was doing a series for television and would be doing the first two or three. David Maloney was producing and they wanted a computer voice; would I go along and do some? Then I asked them what kind of computer voice they wanted they said that they wouldn't know until they heard it. So I went along and did various voices for them from a script that they gave me and they cast me as Zen. I can't remember how many voices I did. I didn't do anything outrageous; any accents or anything, though there were some weird and wonderful ones in Terminal. In the end it was just my voice slightly modulated. Occasionally there was a bit of echo if it warranted it, but on the whole it was just my voice speaking a certain distance from the microphone."

It seemed to me from this account that poor old Zen had been cast rather as an afterthought than as part of the Seven, in spite of his inevitable inclusion. Was this so?

"I think they wanted someone to play Zen as part of the Seven but I didn't see any of them until about episode three or four. I don't quite remember. I met them at the first rehearsal for that episode but not before. In DOCTOR WHO *I never met any of the other cast; was never even in the studio. Not in Ark in Space, Masque of Mandragora or the one with the big brain thingy [Time and the Rani]. I did all my voices out of context for those shows so there was never any point in going into the studio. It was like a voice over for a commercial station."*

Unless it's Me

Given that Peter never actually appeared and wasn't even heard until that late on it crossed my mind that the rest of the cast might have looked down on him a bit. I put this to Peter and he was quite affronted. Certainly not, he said. *"You have to act just as much as a voice as when you're appearing. What a funny suggestion. Why do you say that? Actors aren't that way. You do your own piece, you know, in your own way. I knew quite a lot of them anyway and I was very lucky. I had quite an easy task compared with having to learn all those lines every week. I didn't have to learn mine. I prefer to be a part of the team and do it live in the studio, taking my cues from the others. I didn't get any eye contact of course but that was that was the role I was playing at the time. I'd love to have been in front of the cameras, but I was quite happy doing what I did. It's different challenge. You have to approach just being a voice in a different way because you have so much more character to get over in the voice alone. Radio is the same. I do a lot of radio plays and story reading which is another facet. Some people say 'Oh, but you're reading the script. How can you do it when you have it in your hand and you're looking at it?' You just do. You act it out and it's as compelling to do as an ordinary theatre performance. Every medium has a different sort of approach. This is what makes the acting life so interesting. If you can do them all it never gets dull. In the theatre of course you get a much greater adrenalin rush. You have the feel of the audience and their reactions when you go on the stage, but when people are sitting at home you never really know. In television you have to play, more or less, to a single person. If you visualised millions at home you'd be scared ever to do anything. In the old days of course there was a lot more playing straight to camera which is kind of similar. Ollie Hardy did it a lot. So did Frankie Howerd and Terry Thomas."*

Anyway, let's get on.

What, I wondered, had all this got to do with radio and voice overs? Maybe I was just being obtuse. Probably. In any case the time was rapidly approaching when Peter would have to rush off and sign autographs and talk to people who would probably ask far more interesting and perceptive questions than I was coming up with. Life is so tough, isn't it? Peter agreed. *"It certainly was in the old days. Live television at the Ally Pally. We used to rush from one studio to another and if we got it wrong well that was just tough. My first television was there. A Somerset Maugham play, I think it was. We did it on the Sunday and then repeated it the following Thursday. Terrifying. I was a presenter as well. When Anglia started up I was asked because I was from East Anglia and we did advertising magazines. Every station had one. Just commercials and we had to learn all the lines because there was no Autocue and we were on screen. Jimmy Hanley did one set in a pub. It was like soap opera except that it was all advertising. He would be sitting there and someone would come up and say 'I like that, that's nice.' 'That's orange juice.' 'Who makes it?' 'Oh, that's Britvic.' That sort of thing."*

Well, quite

"I did it every week for three years with a girl at Anglia. We had to learn all the prices and everything until Autocue came when we could just read it off. That's how I started in television, really. Presenting programmes for schools; question and answer, all unscripted and off the cuff. We never made much of a distinction between actors and presenters. We did both. I did a lot of cabaret and presenting and stand up when I was in the forces. I did a lot of revue work in the West End so I've gone through the whole process and been lucky enough to keep on doing it. It doesn't really happen now, but then there's a lot that doesn't. When I first started out I was in weekly rep. The same play twice a night for a week and then on to the next one. Reps are two or three weekly nowadays. It's better in a way because it gives you more time to get into a role and establish it in your mind. But we did it because that was the way it worked."

And non-stop erotic cabaret.

In his early career Peter was known from time to time to appear as a pantomime dame. Unfortunately I had forgotten about this at the time of the interview, so we didn't talk about it.

AND ALL THINGS NICE...?

RECENTLY a friend remarked that she tended to enjoy programmes which revolved around two strong male characters engaged in a very distinct relationship. Hence, she was a great fan of BLAKE'S 7, of ALIAS SMITH AND JONES, and of the Picard/Q episodes of THE NEXT GENERATION, and wondered why she didn't engage with female characters in a similar way. I suggested that this was probably because there are no TV programmes in which two women play the leads and their relationship to some extent guides the programme's development. We did eventually remember CAGNEY AND LACEY, but this had to fight tooth and nail to remain on the airwaves, despite its solid and adoring following. We most certainly couldn't think of any telefantasy programme in which the relationship between two women was a key theme. I fell to considering women in telefantasy in general, and found a pretty sorry state of affairs.

Why, as an intelligent, well-educated female, do I watch telefantasy programmes? Well, lads, it ain't for the female role models, that's for sure. The portrayal of women in DOCTOR WHO has been discussed at length by DWB before, and has more recently been drawn to our attention by Janet Fielding at Panopticon, so I won't go into it again. We've all heard that there's no really good female character except for Liz Shaw, and wasn't Sarah-Jane wasted, and that Ace wasn't really my cup of tea, and as for Bonnie Langford.... Well, perhaps a wider view might show why, on the whole, the fairer sex becomes the extremely dull sex in most TVSF.

I've managed to identify three main 'types' of woman in telefantasy. First, you have the 'carer'. The woman who spends her time worrying about others, and picking up after them, and generally doing all those standard things that women do, because women, as we all know, are the more sentimental sex. ST:TNG is stuffed full of them. There's Deanna Troi, Ship's Counsellor and all-round shoulder to cry on. There's Bev Crusher, Ship's Doctor. And then there's Guinan - surely a representation of a maternal figure if ever there was one. Cally from BLAKE'S 7 is another good example, and one that demonstrates the way in which a female character can be re-moulded into this part. When she joined the crew of the Liberator, Cally was a fully paid-up member of the loony guerilla brigade. By the time she died on Terminal she had become ship's nurse and hand-holder. Another maternal figure, just like Guinan. What worries me most about this type of female is the way that it portrays women as more naturally sympathetic and more able to deal with emotional situations than men. As far as I'm concerned, this does men a great disservice, as well as trapping women into a role into which many might feel uncomfortable, but are made to feel that their discomfort is rather a failure — a failure to live up to expectations forced upon them by external influences.

And then you have the 'feisty female'. You know, the sexy gunslinger. The woman who can take care of herself. The woman who knows how to carry herself in a 'man's world'. The woman that's completely bloody stereotyped. BLAKE'S 7 is a particular offender here. Starting at the top, you've got Jenna. Then Dayna. And then Soolin. Spot a theme here? Each one suffers from the fact that all too often male scriptwriters think that female character development means the woman has one hand on her hips and the other holding a gun. In each case, a role is wasted. Surely the Jenna/Cally relationship was worth some attention (a two-sided one such as I mentioned at the beginning). How about a look at Dayna's development as she moves from being a isolated girl into being a woman? (Rather in the manner later tried with some genuine success with Ace). Cally would have made an interesting if unusual mentor. Surprisingly, I often find Soolin the most engaging of the BLAKE'S 7 females. She sometimes exudes a degree of world weariness that makes me sympathise with her immediately. Hence, some of my favourite lines come from *Headhunter*:

Orac: I can give you heart's desire...
Soolin (stopping on the stairs): You wouldn't know where to start...

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION also boasts an array of 'feisty females' in its attempts to counteract the effect of the 'carer'. Tasha Yar is the most obvious example. Ensign Ro is another, as well as DS9's Major Kira (who is Ro anyway but, in true DS9 style, is less interesting). Tasha Yar is an intriguing example, because her aggressiveness is quite explicitly shown to stem from her childhood experiences. So it's seen as an aberration, as somehow 'unnatural'. Women are naturally 'carers', remember? If Tasha had had a traditionally cosy federation upbringing she would, presumably, have become a doctor, or a counsellor... someone more 'feminine'.

And then there's the final category. The 'completely bland one'. The woman who's there because she's a woman, and well, we ought to have one, oughtn't we? Examples of this type are STAR COPS' Anna Shoun, the dull-as-they-come Dax and any female you can manage to think of on Original TREK. They're skirt, they're there to keep the dads watching. Original TREK I shall draw a hasty veil over (I refuse to use the word 'Classic' as a description of this programme). Anna Shoun occasionally hints at potential in the way that she becomes increasingly able to cope with Devis's abuse, and in her highly moral and principled view of the world. Dax is a sorry, sorry waste though, particularly as the nature of the Trill's relationship with the host body now seems to be more parasitic than symbiotic. Surely there are some unpleasant questions to ask here...?

Now, I'm as shameless as the next woman when it comes to the sight of Turlough in shorts, and I have a thing about Harrison Ford and Alan Rickman. Yet can anyone deny that women's sexuality is exploited in a way that a man's never is? This is a bit of an old chestnut, so I won't dwell on it, but it's a pretty pathetic state of affairs when it becomes clear that a good proportion of women are still being cast in roles because of their looks and their legs.

To prove that I'm not entirely miserable, I can think of a number of women characters, from a variety of telefantasy programmes, that I've liked. There's Kate Pulaski: The Doctor from the second season of ST:TNG. Her character does not depend on her looks, and while she is a doctor, she isn't simply a carer, as she's clearly a well-respected scientist. Her relationship with Picard was well on the way to becoming entertaining in the amount of mutual bitching that goes on, but (sadly) she didn't last long, and Bland Bev returned to our screens.

Pal Kenzie: phenomenally entertaining. Again, another female who gives her boss as good as she gets, without just being a 'feisty female'. Frequently described as 'that bloody woman', which is usually the sign that there's something worth watching there.

Servalan: Well, Jacqueline Pearce, actually. Makes the most out of what could have been an appallingly hackneyed part and creates a genuinely memorable female role.

Jenny Richards: The one that didn't cut her hair off in SURVIVORS. Originally I dismissed her as a 'bland', but gradually I came to see a good deal more in her. Jenny is the 'everyman' character, the one with whom the viewer's supposed to identify. We fell sure that

A example for all women? Or perhaps not.... Dayna Mellanby (Josette Simon) ©BBC Video

Abby will survive because she is strong and has a purpose and that Greg's expertise will see him through, but Jenny is like you and I — helpless and in need of people. And so 'everyman' becomes 'everywoman'. So good that I can almost forgive Terry Nation for Jenna.

That's four, from just over thirty years of programmes. It's a start, I suppose, but I'd welcome any suggestions as to where I can find another believable, entertaining female. So why are women so badly catered for in telefantasy? I'd suggest that an important factor is the severe lack of female writers. Here I do not mean to imply that only women can write for women. Jane Baker is female, but I don't think much of the Rani, however much I like Professor Lasky. But I think that many men have a genuine block when writing for women, because they become conscious that they are writing for a woman, rather than for a character — They slip into using a stereotype rather than just getting on with the writing, as they would do for a man. Even Bob Holmes had problems when forced to write for the fairer sex. This is why I think Tanith Lee provides some of the best-written stories I've seen. Ironically enough, these are for BLAKE'S 7, which also contains the notoriously and shamefully misogynistic scripts of Ben Steed. Lee obviously doesn't approach her scripts by thinking to herself, 'Here I'm writing for a man, here I'm writing for a woman'. Instead she writes for the characters, so in *Sarcophagus* she is more interested in Cally's telepathic nature and her feelings of isolation, whilst in *Sand* she makes a serious attempt to deal with Servalan's motivations, rather than sticking her in as the clichéd powerful sexy female.

I like many telefantasy programmes because I like watching series which are primarily character-led; where the interplay (and clashes) of a set of clear and distinct personalities are a key driving force in the narrative. This is why I like BLAKE'S 7 and STAR COPS. It's also why I like THE BILL, and a whole host of other programmes that aren't telefantasy, but aren't quite soaps. What I want to see is good characters, interacting convincingly. It doesn't really matter which sex they are — but the rarity of well drawn females makes their appearances a particular joy to see....

Una McCormack

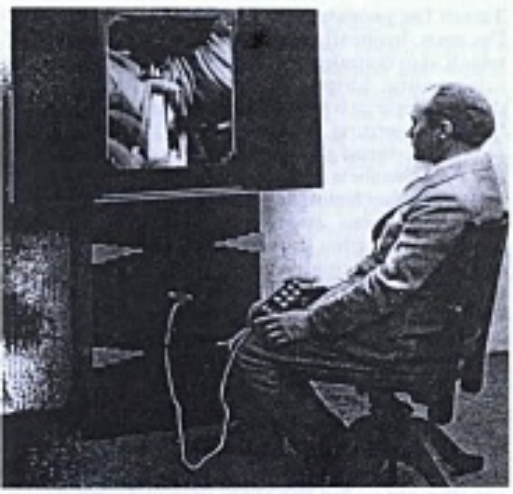
Wanderers in the Fourth Dimension

Stephen Baycroft considers the ways in which *An Unearthly Child* reflects early conceptions of the nature of the fourth dimension.

THE CONCEPT of a fourth dimension has had a long and complex history and been subject to at least three different interpretations. The interest of western culture in the notion of a fourth dimension of space stems from the development of n-dimensional geometries during the first half of the 19th century. The development of such ideas made it necessary for writers and artists whose experience was confined to the three dimensional world to create a new language and method of reasoning if they were to describe and discuss something which they could neither see nor feel. By the start of the 20th century the fourth dimension had become highly popular in both Europe and America as part of a mystical tradition which considered it to be a higher reality beyond three dimensional visual perception, and this idea persisted after scientific theory in this area took a different route, with the development of Einstein's Theory of Relativity.

Three mystical themes were central to early 20th century discussions regarding the fourth dimension; firstly, the sensation of the infinite immensity of space; secondly, he evolution of a higher consciousness by an individual which would allow them to perceive a higher dimensional space where the logic and reality of the three dimensional world no longer held; and thirdly, the philosophical monism (ie: a theory which explains varied phenomena using a single principle) that the individual could become one with the absolute by uniting the spiritual and material. Discussions by writers such as the Englishman Charles Howard Hinton [*The Fourth Dimension*, 1904], the American Claude Bragdon [*Four Dimensional Vistas*, 1916] and the Russian P.D. Ouspensky [*Tertium Organum*, 1912] all expressed the fourth dimension in terms of "hyperspace philosophy" — the belief that true reality could only be perceived by means of a higher consciousness. The ideas propounded by theosophists such as Annie Leadbeater in the early 1900s about the nature of the fourth dimension were particularly important for writers such as Beagdon and Ouspensky, whose publications made extensive use of theosophical arguments to interpret the three mystical themes of the fourth dimension in terms of the theory of hyperspace.

Bragdon was one of the founding members of a group known as the Prometheans, who set up a studio on New York's Long Island to develop "colour organ" mechanisms that could be incorporated into console instruments for producing so-called colour music for the eye. The fusion of human perceptions of the inputs of two different senses (synaesthesia) in colour music was considered to be the ultimate spiritual achievement because it reconciled the illusory three dimensional world with the authentic four dimensional world of abstract concepts. The end product of these synaesthetic endeavours was Bragdon and Thomas Wilfred's "silent clavilux organ" (1921) which consisted of a console instrument that produced dematerialised kinetic configurations of coloured light known as "lumia". Performances of Wilfred's lumia shows became very popular in Europe at events such as the Exposition des Art Decoratifs in Paris in 1925. In 1926 Wilfred produced a portable cabinet (the "home clavilux") whose screen rendered his programmed four-dimensional "lumia compositions" in a two-dimensional format. This device (whose appearance strongly resembled that of a modern TV set) manifested a four-dimensional conception because no single image represented a full cycle of its colour mechanism and because each incremental movement of this mechanism revealed another aspect of a multidimensional lumia event which could not be described fully in two or three dimensions.



Thomas Wilfred using the first "home clavilux" c.1930 (Sterling Museum Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

The visual images generated by Wilfred's clavilux look similar to those developed by Bernard Lodge for the DOCTOR WHO title sequence, even though they were produced by very different means. Indeed the description of one of Wilfred's lumia configurations from his composition *Counterpoint in Space, Opus 146* (1956) as a form which "surges upwards in a pointed wedge, piercing through and fanning open to occupy the entire field" could apply equally well to the opening seconds of the titles, later reused as the TARDIS dematerialising at the end of *An Unearthly Child*. Much of Wilfred's work made use of visually symmetrical images, and this recalls the sequence in which the word OHO is superimposed on a symmetrical lumia configuration. Only later in the sequence do the asymmetrical words (DOCTOR) WHO appear, moving away from the viewer to disappear into the lumia of the fourth dimension.

Later practitioners of colour music during the 1950s and 1960s such as Jordan Belson in California used their knowledge of Wilfred's work (and of the western and non-western spiritual and theoretical ideas on which it was based) to produce films that combined lumia manifestations with electronic music (sound collages) in order to evoke a complex synthetic macrocosm which referred to both the spiritual fourth dimension and later relativity theory. A similar effect was achieved by the original titles for DOCTOR WHO. Wilfred's lumia compositions also dealt with theosophical ideas regarding the attainment of "four-dimensional vision" during which colours would transform rapidly into other colours and where patterns of turbulence (so called "thought-forms" or "auras") were believed to be apparitions of the fourth dimension. It is interesting to note that both of these phenomena were major features of the opening and closing titles of DOCTOR WHO during the early Pertwee seasons. Kinetic lumia configurations were also used elsewhere in DOCTOR WHO (on the viewing screen of the flight console of the Dalek time machine) when the script called for the implication of movement in the fourth dimension.

That the mystical and romantic philosophical discourse regarding the concept of a fourth dimension during the late 19th and early 20th century played an important part in the creation of *An Unearthly Child* is also suggested by apparent influences in the script and visual imagery of this episode. The idea that the substance of the fourth dimension consisted of an invisible ether which occupied all of space became prominent following the publication of the book *The Unseen Universe: or Physical Speculation on a Future State* by British scientists Balfour Sewart and Peter Guthrie Tait in 1885. Charles Howard Hinton in his book *A New Era in Thought* (1888) also proposed that this ether was the boundary between two four-dimensional spaces. That the dense fog which envelops the policeman and the TARDIS at the start of the first episode might represent a physical manifestation of this mystical ether is supported in the pilot episode by Susan's reference to the fog being "mysterious", an allusion that was replaced by one referring to the "dark" in the final transmitted episode. Susan's comments also serve to reinforce the "romantic" nature of the fog and to show that (unlike her teachers) she is aware that there is something special about it.

Mystical references and symbolism also feature prominently in the junkyard scene where the two schoolteachers try to question the Doctor about Susan's sudden disappearance. Much of the psychical research and spiritualist practices that became fashionable during the late 19th and early 20th Century were closely linked to ideas about mysticism and the evolution of consciousness. Experimentation of this kind was (and still is) considered to be abnormal and/or fraudulent by large sections of society who (like Barbara) felt that such things should be "best left alone". The Doctor might therefore symbolise just such a psychical experimenter (or cloaked magician), whose clandestine practices would be considered to be those of a charlatan by authority figures such as schoolteachers or the police, yet whose appearance in the junkyard causes Ian and Barbara to "hear voices" whose source or substance (ie: Susan) lies hidden inside his magic "box".

Once inside the TARDIS the characters of the Doctor and Susan are further distinguished from those of Ian and Barbara by a script which highlights the difficulties faced by the two schoolteachers when confronted with the reality of a new dimension. For authors like P.D.Ouspensky human perceptions of matter, time and motion in the three-dimensional world were an illusion, the reality of which could only be achieved by the cultivation of a new kind of logic (the "tertium organum") and by the evolution of a higher level of consciousness that allowed an individual to perceive four-dimensional reality. Ouspensky conceived of creatures whose evolving consciousness, monism and sense of infinity concerning the fourth dimension would give them knowledge which to those who were only aware of the three dimensional world would appear miraculous. The recurring references to illusion and a lack of understanding in the script of *An Unearthly Child* serve to distinguish Ouspensky's conscious creatures (the Doctor and Susan) from Ian and Barbara, whose bewildered response on passing through the doors of the TARDIS into another dimension demonstrates their inability to comprehend what has happened to them. The Doctor's consistent rebuttal of Ian and Barbara's questions about the nature of the TARDIS resembles that of a master who knows that his pupils are unable to understand the implications of what he is saying. His judgement certainly appears to be correct about Ian, whose sense of astonishment and disbelief about what has happened to him remains unchanged throughout the entire episode. By contrast it is Barbara who shows what the Doctor describes in the pilot episode as "the first faint glimmerings" of understanding that will help her consciousness to adapt to the new dimension in which she finds herself.

In *Tertium Organum* (p.235) Ouspensky states that mathematics is the means by which humanity can achieve a higher level of consciousness. It may therefore be no coincidence that the set of the interior of the TARDIS prominently display many of the geometrical symbols that represent the three-dimensional (Euclidean) antecedents of the concepts discussed by the characters during the first scene inside

Thomas Wilfred composing lumia c.1921

the TARDIS. Strong similarities also exist between the appearance of the TARDIS console and the work of Russian Constructivist artists (such as Naum Gabo) during the second and third decades of this century. Gabo's work *Vertical* (1923-25) and *Column* (1922-23) show many structural similarities to the TARDIS console. It is also interesting to note that Naum Gabo's work during the early 1920's was greatly influenced by the writings of both Hinton and Ouspensky regarding the fourth dimension. Such constructions were thought by their makers to go beyond what Ouspensky called "Euclidean" ways of thinking about the world.

Theosophists such as Helena P. Blavatsky strongly believed that developments in 19th century science (in particular atomic theory) supported the idea that three dimensional matter could be dematerialised to produce a four-dimensional reality or spirit. The dematerialisation event which takes place at the end of *An Unearthly Child* closely mimics the way in which Wilfred's home clavilux produced the same phenomenon. The home clavilux consisted of several gem encrusted disks and distorting mirrors whose revolution at various speeds reflected light onto a viewing screen (a method later used to create the effects seen on the caps of the *Enterprise* warp nacelles, where it was intended to represent the creation of a 'fourth-dimensional' warp field). The resulting lumia compositions could be programmed on the clavilux by using the console to set "temporal coordinates" which regulated the movement of the discs and mirrors of the colour mechanism. The main console, central column and viewing screen of the TARDIS could be a symbolic representation of Wilfred's home clavilux, the central console and column (with its mechanism of reflective discs and lights) generating dematerialised images which are seen on the viewing screen. During the first dematerialisation event the movement of the camera simulates not only the sudden motion of the TARDIS but also follows a trajectory that sweeps it over the central column of the console, whose own movement is directly responsible for the disappearance of the three-dimensional "illusiary" world from the viewing screen, and its replacement by four dimensional reality. While both Susan and the Doctor have the level of consciousness needed to adapt to this amazing event, it is too much for Ian and Barbara, both of whom collapse into unconsciousness. The lumia composition which manifests the entry of the TARDIS into the fourth dimension includes lumia from the opening titles of the episode as well as those that resemble planetary and galactic orbits. Lumia of the latter type were considered to portray not only "the music of the spheres" but also some of the scientific issues underlying n-dimensional geometry. The sound collage which so effectively simulates the dematerialisation of the TARDIS during this and subsequent episodes was later to become an appropriate (and indeed poignant) accompaniment to the dematerialisation of the first Doctor's own physical form at the end of *The Tenth Planet*.

Ouspensky's writings on the three themes of the fourth dimension influenced both the Russian Futurists and Constructivists as well as major figures in the Surrealist movement such as Andre Breton. However the marked decline of interest in the fourth dimension as an artistic issue after 1930 due to the popularisation of Einstein's General Theory of Relativity (which replaced a fourth dimension of space with time as the spatial conception of this dimension) meant that Surrealism was the last major artistic manifestation of the themes of infinity, monism and evolving consciousness. Science fiction literature, film and television were all major beneficiaries (and subsequent proponents) of the ideas and concepts fostered by the Surrealist movement until its fragmentation into a variety of different disciplines during the 1930s. Renewed scientific interest in four-dimensional space had to await developments in the exploration of the spaces implied by research in both physics and computer graphics that began during the 1970s. Such research has steadily increased the number of scientific applications which incorporate the concept of a fourth dimension.

An example of how such a philosophical leap can connect to practical applications is then shown in the later episodes of *An Unearthly Child*. A major theme underlying the first episode of this story is the attainment of a level of consciousness by an individual which allows them to perceive a higher (fourth) dimension. One of the most important earlier such advances in the evolution of human consciousness occurred when Homo Erectus discovered the secret of fire. The dramatic cultural consequences of this discovery (in particular the increased self-awareness that resulted from greater cooperation between the different members of a group) gave such populations a survival advantage over other groups who did not have this knowledge. Just as the Doctor represents a new Prometheus who shows Ian and Barbara the means by which a conscious awareness of the fourth dimension can be achieved, so Ian is also a Promethean whose gift of the secret of fire to the tribe of Gum maintains their existing level of consciousness, promotes their survival and thus allows Ian to play a part in his own evolution. The conflict between Kal and Za highlights the tragic consequences and problems faced by humanity as a result of such cultural evolution. As Ouspensky states in *Tertium Organum* (p.204), "European culture began from the life of the savage, taking this life as an example... to develop all its sides to the uttermost without thinking of their moral aspects. The savage crushed the head of his enemy with a simple club. We invented for this purpose complicated devices, making possible the crushing of hundreds of thousands of heads at once." In the same book (p.200) Ouspensky also makes it suggests that the emotional state of the individual can either help or hinder the development of a higher level of consciousness: "Certain emotions...are disruptive, separative, alienating, forcing man to feel himself as individualised and separate; such are hatred, fear, jealous pride, envy. These are emotions of a materialistic order forcing a belief in matter. And there are emotions which are intuitive harmonising, making man feel himself to be part of some great whole; such are love, sympathy, friendship, companionship...These emotions lead man out of the material world and show him the truth of the world of the wondrous." The conflict between Kal and Za demonstrates how "materialistic" emotions hinder the evolution of humanity while the actions of the Doctor and his companions show Za and his tribe the beneficial effects of sympathy and friendship.

That such events and conflicts continued into the 20th century is shown however when once considers the socio-economic factors which may have influenced the development of the script for both versions of *An Unearthly Child*. During the 1950s and early 1960s Britain was still recovering from the economic and human consequences of the Second World War. The mass migrations of people across the world which resulted from this war meant that cities such as London became even more cosmopolitan than they had previously been. The major social and cultural changes precipitated by such migrants as well as the economic effects of the rapid decline of the British Empire served to heighten the mood of pessimism, dislocation and loss felt by a large segment of the population of Britain at this time. Following the lead of French existentialist writers such as Albert Camus and the novels of Samuel Beckett, the theme of the outsider, "foreigner" or migrant as a figure of alienation from the rest of society became a popular

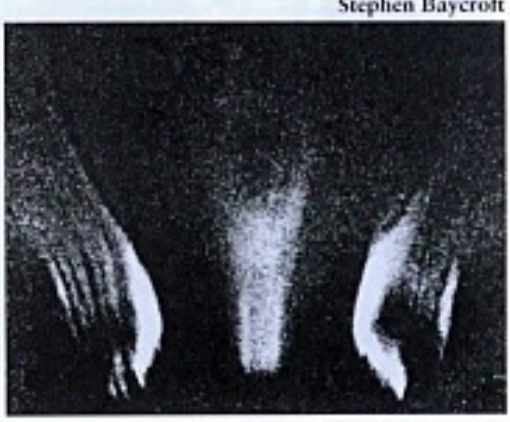
Above and below: Photographs of clavilux projections by Thomas Wilfred (c.1921, photo by Francis Bruguière)

one in British literature, theatre and cinema. For example, during the 1950s playwrights such as Harold Pinter and John Osbourne repeatedly confronted the British public with the problems faced by the alienated individual. Medical treatises on this theme such as *The Divided Self* (196) by the existentialist psychologist PD Laing also had a wide readership. Perhaps the damaged mannequin featured so prominently with Susan during the brief scene in which she is alone in the junkyard is a representation of her as just such a divided self. It is interesting to note that Ian and Barbara almost mistake the same mannequin for Susan while they are searching the junkyard. The issue of individual alienation was also a frequent theme of the popular music which came to symbolise the youth culture of the sixties. Such music would have had added significance for an alien such as Susan, and could explain why on her first appearance she was shown alone in an empty classroom, her only source of companionship being the music playing on her radio.

It is easy to see the characterisation of Susan and the Doctor as being 'cut off from their own planet' as a direct reflection of the experiences and difficulties faced by the many migrants and exiles living in England at the time, alienated from the society in which they now lived. For such individuals, London was a 'city of strangers'. The first episode of *An Unearthly Child* therefore successfully manages to emphasise not only the alien characteristics of the Doctor and Susan but also something of their more vulnerable and sensitive human-like qualities as well. It is unfortunate that the social themes under-pinning this first episode remain as relevant today as when the programme was first transmitted.

This article has suggested some of the reasons why the characters in *An Unearthly Child* may have been portrayed as they were, and also some of the intellectual and artistic sources which may have influenced the production. *An Unearthly Child* is not only the first episode of a famous science fiction series; it is also a superb example of how the concept of a fourth dimension has survived the passage of time, its enduring role as a source of inspiration for writers, artists and scientists showing the contribution it continues to make to the diversity and vitality of contemporary culture.

Stephen Baycroft



STAR TREK THE NEXT GENERATION

14|**Sub Rosa** 5th February 1994

TELEPLAY BY BRANNON BRAGA; TELEVISION STORY BY JERI TAYLOR; DIRECTOR JONATHAN FRAKES; MUSIC JAY CHATTAWAY; VISUAL EFFECTS SUPERVISOR DAVID STIPES

Unexpected familial relationships take centre stage again, but in a most unusual form as the secret of the Howard women is handed down to Beverly Crusher.

The Enterprise diverts to Caldos where Beverly Crusher's elderly grandmother has died. Leesa Howard raised her granddaughter from the time she was orphaned as a child, and taught her something of her own skills as a healer. At the funeral, Beverly notices a handsome stranger who throws flowers into the grave and gives her "a remarkable look." She has no idea who he might have been.

She returns to her grandmother's rustic home, which now belongs to her, to decide what to do with the many beloved items it contains. Captain Picard finds himself taken in tow by the colony's governor. Caldos is one of the earliest Federation terraforming projects and the governor hopes Enterprise will stay long enough for her engineers to check out the ageing weather and power control systems.

Caldos is remarkable in that the colony was designed to duplicate the Scottish Highlands of centuries ago. The cornerstone of every town was brought from Scotland, the architecture and dress are all duplications of that time and place. Troi enjoys seeing the antiques that the Howard family brought with them from Earth, including a family heirloom handed down to all the Howard women for centuries - it is a candle in a pewter holder which is always lit to symbolize their spirit. Troi also notices in photos that Leesa Howard had strikingly green eyes and Beverly tells her that every Howard woman has had green eyes except she and her mother.

After Troi leaves, Beverly decides to take the candle and her grandmother's journals back to the ship, but she is disturbed and angered by the sudden arrival of Ned Quint, who has looked after the house for years. He blows out the candle and demands that she leave it behind, saying it has brought nothing but misery to her family. She orders the man to leave and takes the heirlooms back to the Enterprise.

Routine inspection of the weather control system suddenly turns up strange fluctuations in the power station. Beverly captures Picard's interest by telling him she has read in her grandmother's journals that the 100 year old woman had a lover. He is even more impressed with the Howard libido, if not a bit shocked, when she tells him that the man in question is 34. That night, as Beverly sleeps, the candle flickers and she feels a presence in her bed. In the morning she tells Troi she had the most realistic dream - a very physical dream in which she was being touched.

Beverly returns to the cemetary and finds Quint at the grave. He warns her the house is haunted, and claims that lighting the candle would bring the ghost back, who is causing these sudden storms while without a home. Geordi and Data try to use the Enterprise's computers to regain control as large thunderstorms form, soaking Beverly as she returns to her house, which is decked with flowers. She sees a man's face in a mirror and a voice, who claims to have been born in Glasgow in 1647, tells her he came to her last night. He found a home with a redhaired girl named Howard, and after her with her daughter and descendants, for centuries, loving them all. And he will soon become one with Beverly. He exerts a compelling power over her as he takes the form of a mist that enfuses her body.

The next day Beverly tells Troi that she has met Ronin, her grandmother's lover. She says she is just intrigued by him but Troi is not deceived - she senses Beverly has romantic feelings about this man. Beverly becomes suspicious when Ned Quint dies while trying to dismantle something at the power station. She meets Ronin at the house and demands an explanation. Ronin uses up a great deal of energy to take physical form and begs her to return to the ship and light the candle. Then they will always be together.

She does as he asks and the next morning Captain Picard storms into the transporter room demanding an explanation for her letter of resignation. She is preparing to beam down to Caldos with her belongings and tells the stunned Captain that she has decided to stay here and be a healer like her grandmother. He unhappily allows her to beam down but soon talks to Troi and decides to meet this Ronin...

Reactions to this story were largely determined by gender. Many men blasted it as "not STAR TREK." Women were generally a good deal more tolerant of a journey into gothic romance. If the premise of an archaic colony and a family secret are accepted, the rest follows pleasingly enough and the final explanation does insist on science over spooks as a resolution. Picard and Beverly watchers have some rewarding moments as well.

Duncan Regehr, who has played both Errol Flynn and Zorro as well as guesting on V, is the Howard women's secret lover. Michael Keanon is the governor. Shay Duffin is Ned Quint, who is more flamboyantly Scottish then Montgomery Scott. And where is Scotty? This colony seems the perfect place for him to park his shuttle for a while and fix those old fashioned systems.(7)

15|**Lower Decks** 12th February 1994

TELEPLAY BY RENE ECHEVARRIA; STORY BY RONALD WILKERSON & JEAN LOUISE MATHIRAS; DIRECTED BY GABRIELLE BEAUMONT; MUSIC JAY CHATTAWAY; VISUAL EFFECTS SUPERVISOR RONALD D. MOORE

A story told from the viewpoint of junior officers — some of whom might be seen again in the new STAR TREK: VOYAGER series next year, if rumour is correct.

It is a tense time for some of the junior officers. Crew evaluation reports are due and after that promotions will be announced. A group of friends share a drink and torture themselves in Ten Forward by watching Riker and Troi work on the evaluations at another table. Ensign Sam Lavelle knows he is up for promotion to Lieutenant and a move up to the Ops bridge assignment on the night watch, but the handsome young man is convinced Riker does not like him.

Ben, one of the civilian bar employees, tells the junior officers that he overheard enough to know that Lavelle and his friend Ensign Sito are up for the same job. Sito is a young Bajoran who currently works in security under Lt. Worf. Alicia Ogawa seems in good humour no matter what happens in the evaluations, but she is falling in love, and has an extremely good relationship with her superior, Dr. Crusher. Taurik, a Vulcan, is finding it difficult to adjust to working for humans in engineering, but he sees no point in worrying about things.

The next day Sito and Lavelle are going through bridge test drills when new orders change their course to the Cardassian border. They find it very frustrating when Picard orders the senior staff into a meeting and leaves the junior officers at their stations and in the dark about what this change of missions portends. Taurik is fairing no better in engineering. He has been experimenting without consulting Geordi and, worse, has based his test on a new and unpublished theory unknown to the Chief Engineer.

Only Ogawa has smooth sailing as Dr. Crusher tells her she is recommending her for promotion. Beverly is more concerned about Ogawa's personal life, as she notices the man spending time in Ten Forward with another woman.

Sito is surprised that she is being considered for Ops, on Worf's recommendation. Ben suggests that Sam try striking up a conversation with Riker but this is not a great success.

The Enterprise takes up a position close to the Cardassian border and waits...eventually spotting a failing escape pod across the border. Geordi must find a way to boost the transporter to retrieve the dying passenger without violating Cardassian space. Crusher is standing by in sickbay but asks Ogawa to leave. Sito is assigned to guard the door against all but senior officers. She gets a hard look from Picard when he arrives.

He tells her to accompany him to the bridge when he emerges from sickbay. Once in his Ready Room he tells her he is concerned about her record. Her seven months on the Enterprise have been exemplary...but Picard has not forgotten that at the Academy she participated in a banned manoeuvre that caused the death of another student and then agreed to conceal that fact (The First Duty). He tells her he doesn't know how she made it on board his ship.

Dr. Crusher has to prepare for surgery on a comatose patient and she needs Ogawa's help, but the young woman must first swear to reveal nothing about what she will see. What she sees is that the patient taken from the escape pod is a Cardassian. She keeps silent that night as the junior officers' poker game turns to speculation about the mysterious arrival. Rumour has it that the patient in sickbay is Ambassador Spock. All Taurik knows for sure is that Geordi LaForge had him create superficial damage on the hull of a shuttlecraft with a phaser rifle...

Shannon Fill returns in the role of Sito, who had been involved in Wesley Crusher's Academy incident. Dan Gauthier, son of the late Dick Gauthier, plays Lavelle, whom Troi and everyone except Riker sees as being very similar to the Enterprise's First Officer. Taurik is played by Alexander Enberg, producer Jeri Taylor's son. Ogawa has been a semi-regular minor character for years as Crusher's favourite nurse and is played by Patti Yasutake. Ben - an obvious Guinan substitute - is played by Bruce Beatty.

It seems very probable that Ogawa is in line to be a crew member on VOYAGER, everyone else is up for grabs. Lavelle registered as a good looking junior Riker, and perhaps a foil for Nick Lucarno if that Academy expellee from the flight accident is among the rebellious contingent on VOYAGER. Sito ended up as the featured player in this story but her fate was left in doubt and do we really need another Bajoran female lead? Taurik was stiff, even for a Vulcan, and lacked the subtle charm of other Starfleet Vulcans we have known - and the VOYAGER Vulcan was supposedly going to be middle-aged. But he can lift an eyebrow.

Apart from speculations about the future, it was difficult to tell the story while viewing the regular cast from a distance and the main plot required considerable leaps of faith by the viewer.(7)

16|**Thine Own Self** 19th February 1994

TELEPLAY BY RONALD D. MOORE; STORY BY CHRISTOPHER HATTEN; DIRECTOR WINRICH KOLBE; MUSIC DENNIS MCCARTHY; VISUAL EFFECTS SUPERVISOR DAVID STIPES

Two officers go on separate journeys of self discovery, but one is in considerably more danger than the other.

Troi returns from a class reunion to find Beverly Crusher in command of the bridge for the night watch. This is normally Data's post, but the android has been sent to recover radioactive materials and data from a space probe which has crashed on Barcon 4, a pre-industrial planet. The crash site is far from the nearest settlement so it should be a routine mission.

It is not the first time the Doctor has taken a watch as bridge officer — a right she earned when she passed the Commander's examination eight years ago — and Troi wants to know why she bothered to obtain a rank she didn't need for her medical career. But Beverly enjoys being in command and wanted to stretch herself a bit. Troi's sudden interest has been sparked by old classmates who have advanced beyond her. She asks Riker if he will support her desire to prepare for the Bridge Officer's Qualifying Exam that she must pass to become a full Commander.

The situation on Barcon 4 is more serious then anyone suspects. Data stumbles into a quiet town with his clothing ripped, unable to talk until he hears a man and his daughter ask him questions about who he is any where he came from. He quickly picks up the language from them but all he can remember is walking a long way to reach this place. Apart from carrying a small case, there is nothing to identify him. Garvin is a widower who was taking his daughter, Gia, to school. They are kindly people and despite Data's strange appearance they take him to their home. Garvin examines the contents of the case but only finds a few pieces of some unusual metal. There is writing on the case which Data tells him is a word, "radioactive," but neither of them know what that means.

Since Data cannot remember his name, Gia calls him Jadon. The town healer, "a practitioner of modern scientific thinking", says that her grandmother would have called Jadon a demon, but she believes that his odd colouring and

Commander Riker & Counselor Troi (©Paramount)

other unusual features are probably normal for his people. She decides he must be an Ice Man, one of an unseen people believed to live in the distant mountain range. Talore can find no signs of illness other then the memory loss and expects that he just needs food after his long journey.

The town blacksmith offers to buy part of the strange metal to make jewellery. An accident at the forge reveals Data's strength when he lifts a huge anvil by himself. Even Garvin is shaken by this but continues to befriend Data. Talore begins to find him a bit trying when he takes exception to her theory that the whole universe is made up of the four elements of rock, fire, sky and water. He feels sure that is not correct even with the gaps in his memory.

Troi becomes thoroughly frustrated when she cannot find a solution to the last part of the Bridge exam. She must solve a major engineering problem but seems to find every avenue she explores closed off. Riker cannot help her and suggests that not everyone is cut out for command.

Garvin has come down with a mysterious illness. His hair is coming out, his skin is hot and then lesions appear. Talore has never seen anything like it. Data observes the simple magnifying glass the healer carries and sets about building a much more powerful device to look at skin samples. He soon builds a small set of laboratory instruments and, as he loses confidence in Talore's ability to deal with the illness, which is already afflicting Gia and the blacksmith, begins his own search for a cause. Data knows some people believe he is responsible for this and he cannot entirely discount the idea even though Talore has been around him and shows no symptoms...

This story suggests that the production staff does take some note of fan criticism as there seems to be a concerted effort to counter the (mostly male) complaint that the Doctor could not be qualified to command the Enterprise as she did in *Descent II*. It also refers back to Troi's rather lacklustre performance when thrust into the position of senior officer on the bridge in *Disaster*. Her lack of knowledge of emergency procedures has been the butt of many jokes from Frakes and Doen ever since.

The Data story is more problematic as he seems to remember a great deal of scientific knowledge without tweaking to what that word on the case signifies. Gia becomes the latest in a long line of children be befriend the android and is played by Ronnie Clair Edwards. Michael Rothhaar is Garvin and Kimberly Cullum is Tulore.(6)

17|**Masks** 26th February 1994

Written by Joe Menosky; Director Robert Weimer; Music Dennis McCarthy; Visual Effects Supervisor Ron Moore

An extremely unusual story apparently designed to let Brent Spiner play a lot of roles without bringing back the Soong family or flitting into the holodeck.

The Enterprise encounters a rogue comet making its way between star systems. There is no record of any previous sighting and Data's analysis indicates the point of origin would have been a star system two sectors away - this object has been on route for 87 million years. Scans seems to show that there is a solid inner core covered by a mantle of ice.

Their investigation is disrupted by an apparent scan echo bounced back to them from the comet's core. But then Troi and Crusher find an odd artifact in the Counselor's quarters, and Data begins to see images and symbols similar to those on the artifact, which then appear on all computer displays.

Something has been downloaded into the computer core from the sensors and this alien intrusion is beginning to reconfigure the whole system. At the same time the replicators are being used to produce objects. Data finds he can read some of the symbols, one of which means death.

They decide to fire at the comet, laying bare an million year old object made of unknown metals at the core. It does not appear to be a ship but its internal structure is quite complex. Data believes it is an informational archive of an entire culture. Picard decides that Data may be in some kind of communication with the object and wants to be sure that his positronic net is unaffected. Geordi attempts to run a diagnostic on his friend while alien artifacts continue to appear all over the ship.

The Captain decides that this library is designed to do more then just store information — it seems on the verge of transforming whole areas of the ship into parts of a city. In the midst of his examination Data warns Geordi that he is experiencing an unusual impulse and suspects he is losing his mind. Suddenly, his voice changes and he announces that 'Masaka is awakening.'

Data now calls himself Ibat and seems to be a cynical but bold personality. This being says that Data is gone, "who can say where?" Picard tries to question Ibat, who says Masaka is death and pain. He laughs at the idea that Picard would like to meet this Masaka. He is startled when Troi enters the room, and a new voice takes Ibat's place and worships Masaka. Geordi's explains that Data's brain is being restructured just as the ship's computer is. He has found a number of behavioural nodes infiltrating the android's positronic brain. The archive is creating people from its culture by placing their personalities in Data. Picard decides he must try to learn what he can from these people inside Data so as to find a way to reverse or shutdown this process. Meanwhile, parts of the ship become swamp and temple.

Ibat comes back to speak with him and says that it is best to let Masaka sleep. She is a lazy creature but when awake does terrible things. Only Korgano can control her, but he no longer pursues her...

There is no guest cast for the episode as Spiner supplies the alien voices, some of whom bear a passing resemblance to Lore and Dr. Soong. The idea of parts of the ship being turned into an aquaduct and a swamp is vaguely intriguing, but that is just a backdrop for Picard playing archeological detective by cross-examining Data's crowded brain in search of a way to shut down the archive.(5)

STAR TREK DEEP SPACE NINE

13|**Armageddon Game** 5th February 1994

Writer Morgon Gendel; Director Winrich Kolbe; Music Jay Chattaway; Visual Effects Supervisor Gary Hutzel

The Odd Couple, Bashir and O'Brien, are out and about again, but this time they must cooperate or die.

The Federation has in effect loaned Doctor Bashir and Chief O'Brien to a delicate operation requiring their expertise. The Tulani and the Kelleran have been at war for over a century and now they have made peace - but they need to dispose of The Harvesters, a deadly bio-mechanical gene disruptor stockpiled by both sides which took ten years to develop.

All the Harvesters have been placed on a cruiser orbiting above Tulani 3 where a joint science team works along with the Starfleet officers to find the proper mix of radiation in a genetic bath to destroy the compound. Bashir grows quite exasperated by the time they have been there a week, but after more than 300 variations he and O'Brien are rewarded with success. It only remains now to destroy the rest of the stockpile and return home to DS9. Both the Tulani and Kelleran ambassadors are profuse with their thanks. Once all the computer records are also destroyed both sides will feel secure in the peace.

O'Brien is rather anxious to return home but Bashir, a bachelor, is rather looking forward to spending the evening admiring Tulani women at the celebratory party. But as the last Harvester cylinder is placed in the genetic bath that afternoon armed Kellerans invade the lab and fire indiscriminately on all the scientists. Bashir and O'Brien gain temporary control of the lab, but more troops are coming and they discover they are unable to transport back to their orbiting Runabout .

O'Brien does succeed in beaming them down to the surface, where they hope they can evade any pursuers long enough for either the Tulani tor Sisko to rescue them. The odds are not in their favour. The first notice Sisko has of a problem is when both the Tulani and Kelleran ambassadors arrive unannounced at DS9 and insist on speaking to him alone. They tell him that all the scientists were killed by a radiation pulse when O'Brien accidentally triggered a security device hidden deep in the lab's computer programming. The ambassadors are most sympathetic and leave Sisko a copy of the security camera log which shows the fatal sequence of events.

Tulani 3 is a ruined world depopulated by the war. Bashir and O'Brien find some left over war supplies, including a medical kit and rations, but O'Brien is more interested in an old communications station. He hopes he can get it working at least long enough to get a warning to the Tulani about the treachery of the Kellerans and to ask for help before they are followed to the surface. He warns Bashir to stay still so they can't be tracked by motion sensors. Bashir quickly irritates the engineer by offering to help with the communications system.

Sisko shows the recording of Bashir's and O'Brien's last minutes to the rest of his staff. It appears that they were destroying the last cylinder. O'Brien is shown sitting at a console drinking coffee when he notes some sort of file has been activated. Before he can reason any further a radiation pulse vaporizes everyone in the room. Kira and Odo are outraged at the carelessness of the Tulani but Sisko points out that their anger will accomplish nothing. He has the task of taking the news and the tape to Keiko O'Brien.

The work on the old equipment goes slowly and O'Brien cannot avoid listening to Bashir chatter away. He tells the younger man that all he thinks about is women but Bashir says it is different for him because he is married. O'Brien is surprised to learn Bashir nearly married a ballerina he met while still at the Academy. Since that experience he has decided that career officers should not marry because it is "not fair to the women" to place them in the position of having to worry about their men. He also makes an ill-advised observation about the effect of assignment to DS9 on O'Brien's marriage.

O'Brien's indignation is cut short by his worsening physical condition. He is cold although the room is warm and his vision is beginning to blur. Bashir examines him and soon realises that he must have been splashed with a drop of the Harvester when the Kelleran attackers blasted the lab equipment holding the final cylinder. The Chief will inevi-

The crew of Deep Space Nine.... (©Paramount)

tably die within hours if they cannot get help....

The trend in alien makeup this year on DS9 has definitely been toward hair and away from noses. Both the Tulani and the Kelleran have exotic piles of highly stylized hair to distinguish them, although the Kelleran seem to have just borrowed theirs wholesale from a samurai film. Darleen Carr and Peter White are the Tulani and Kelleran ambassadors. Rosalind Chao gets more scope than usual to display her talents as Keiko O'Brien when she learns she is now a widow. Bashir bashers got fresh ammunition when he is made to utter some idiotically sexist remarks.(8)

14|**Whispers** 12th February 1994

Written by Paul Robert Coyle; Director Les Landau; Music Dennis McCarthy; Visual Effects Supervisor Glenn Neufeld

Colm Meaney takes centre stage in an unusual episode which co-stars the voice of the computer.

Chief O'Brien is alone in a Runabout - and fleeing into the Gamma Quadrant to get away from something. To set the record straight about the last few days, he begins a computer log after setting course for the Paradan system at top speed. He knows he may not survive the journey because he expects that "they" will be coming after him.

He first began to notice that things seemed not quite right the first morning after he returned to the station from a mission to the Gamma Quadrant. Keiko was up extremely early and insisted she needed to leave for school almost immediately and would take Molly with her. And Molly had refused to let her father kiss her. He felt that perhaps he was just tired after filling in for Odo on a visit with the Pradans to go over security procedures for their upcoming visit to the station. But when he went by Odo's office he found one of his assistants reprogramming the security sensors. He had been waiting for Odo's return from Bajor before starting this task and felt outraged that anyone else would presume to start the job.

The man insisted that Sisko ordered that the job be done. When O'Brien stormed off to confront Sisko about this, he was startled to spot his commanding officer deep in conversation with Keiko on the Promenade. He tells the computer that he found this all a little curious at the time. The computer tells him that the Runabout Mekong is now in pursuit.

The odd behaviour had continued on DS9. Bashir made himself more irritating then usual by insisting that it was absolutely necessary for him to give O'Brien a physical right now. Sisko backed him up by saying it was needed for the annual report. But first Sisko wanted to hear about the Paradans - whose security concerns seem a bit paranoid. O'Brien pointed out that this was not surprising after 12 years of civil war. They are willing to discuss peace on this neutral site but both sides still distrust the other. O'Brien wants to get on to supervising the reprogramming of the security systems to meet the Paradan requirements, but Sisko tells him that power is out in all the upper pylons again. This must be his first priority, although O'Brien cannot believe that the system he just completely repaired could be seriously malfunctioning. When he mentions to Sisko that he saw him talking to Keiko, Sisko says that they were discussing his son Jake's disappointing grades.

O'Brien next found himself trapped in sickbay for an endless examination. Bashir admits he can find nothing wrong with him and lets him go. The engineer's suspicions are further fanned by an encounter with Jake, who tells him his grades are as good as they always have been, and an examination of the pylon power systems which seems to show deliberate damage.

A return to his quarters does not prove reassuring. Keiko tells him Molly is staying overnight with a friend but rejects his attempt to make it a romantic evening for the two of them. As they sat together through an awkward dinner,

Left: Constable Odo (Rene Auberjonois) ©Paramount

O'Brien came to the conclusion that this is not his Keiko. He waited until she went to sleep and then sat up working with the computer to analyse every recent event on the station for abnormalities. He was convinced that whatever was happening had to be caused by the Paradan conference.

He went through all messages logs for the days he was gone but he discovered messages sealed and access denied to him beginning with the day of his return. He broke through enough of the lockout to pick up a reference to messages Sisko has been receiving from the Paradan system. Not trusting anyone else now, he went to see Odo, who had just returned from Bajor. He laid out his observations and suspicions to the security chief. He feared that the Paradan rebels have somehow gained control of key personnel. Odo decided they could not call Starfleet yet, for what could they tell them? He promised to investigate on his own and seek corroborating evidence. O'Brien felt somewhat relieved but prepared for an emergency escape just in case it proves necessary...

Rosalind Chao appears once again as Keiko and Susan Bay, Leonard Nimoy's wife, again appears as the Starfleet Admiral for DS9's region of space. Majel Barret Roddenberry 'appears' as the voice of the computer, something that supposedly was not going to happen on DS9. The resolution may come as no surprise to those who know their Agatha Christie.(7)

15|**Paradise** 19th February 1994

TELEPLAY BY JEFF KING AND RICHARD MANNING & HANS BEIMLER; STORY BY JIM TROMBETTA AND JAMES CROCKER; DIRECTOR COREY ALLAN; MUSIC DENNIS MCCARTHY; VISUAL EFFECTS SUPERVISOR GARY HUTZEL

O'Brien continues to take centre stage, but this time he is paired off on a mission with the usually glum Commander Sisko — who seems in need of a refresher on command decision making.

Sisko and O'Brien have taken a Runabout to do a survey of habitable star systems near the Wormhole in response to an inquiry about possible colony sites. Sisko takes the opportunity to ask the Chief if he would take on his son Jake as a trainee. The Commander is worried that Jake lacks the mechanical aptitude necessary for a good shot at Starfleet Academy. O'Brien assures him that he showed no greater talent for his career when he was Jake's age.

They are surprised to find that there is not only an M-class planet in the Aurelius system, there are also human lifesigns on its surface although there is no record of a colony in the area. They move into orbit but can raise no response and O'Brien also detects an unusual low level duonetic field. The two officers decide to beam down to investigate, and immediately find that neither their tricorders nor their communicators work on the surface. Without communicators they cannot call the ship's computer and get themselves beamed back up to the Runabout. Before they can deal with that problem, they are confronted by several men armed with bows and arrows.

Fortunately, they are recognised as Starfleet officers because they have just found survivors of a ship that crashed here almost ten years ago. The Santa Maria was headed for a different system when the ship developed life support problems. They landed to make repairs and found their systems inoperative once they came within range of the same effect O'Brien and Sisko have just encountered. They have experienced considerable hardship without the aid of technology but the planet has become their home. O'Brien is greatly perplexed as to what could cause such malfunctions.

They are taken back to the camp to meet the rest of the survivors. The ship has at least been useful as shelter and everyone lives within its hull. Although there is no formal leadership, they soon meet Alexis, who has quite a lot to say about the virtues of this life. She says they have rediscovered what man is capable of without technology. They grow their food, make their own cloth and everyone must contribute for the community to survive. Others may debate whether or not to leave if a rescue ship indeed comes for their visitors, but she says she will never leave here or want what they have in their community to change. She also tells Sisko and O'Brien that as long as they are here they will have to take their turn working in the fields.

The new arrivals are given space within the ship - and also receive a supply of essays written by Alexis, who seems to have been a prolific author on the human condition before their ill-fated journey. Her message had been that humans have become fat, lazy and dull. O'Brien is appalled to find that the ship contains virtually no equipment or materials he might find useful. It has been gutted of virtually everything. Joseph, who had been the ship's engineer, sympathises with him. He too had found it very hard to give up on trying to get their technical systems working again, but he had to accept that the equipment was useless and only a reminder of an old life when they needed to adopt new ways to survive.

The most difficult case of this adjustment is brought into focus by a sick colonist. She has been infected by the bite of an insect which has already claimed three lives. O'Brien insists that they must work on a way to recontact the Runabout's computer so they can get access to the medical kit there. Alexis assures them this is a dangerous waste of valuable energy. The only productive response is to continue to search the forest for potentially useful herbs and roots. To do anything else threatens to disrupt everything the community stands for. In fact, she insists that they make no more mention of a rescue party that may or may not ever appear and wants them to get rid of their uniforms.

DS9 had rather quickly realised something might be wrong when they got no response to a routine message. But they had no idea where the two men might be until learning that a Romulan ship reported sighting a Runabout travelling at warp 2 through sector 401 with no one aboard. Dax and Kira immediately take another Runabout to go in pursuit of this mystery ship.

The colonists are quite pleased with Sisko's horticultural abilities. He explains that his father was a chef who grew his own food in a garden that had to be tended by his sons. However, the afternoon is marred by the discovery that the community has its own forms of punishment. A man has been left in a small, uncomfortable box in the heat of the sun for a day after stealing a candle. O'Brien and Sisko are shocked by the severity of the punishment, but Alexis says everyone in the community had agreed that this was a simple and effective way to maintain order and discipline.

Sisko is now determined to get out of the colony and orders O'Brien to put his energies to finding a way around the field which seems to cripple their technological devices. The commander is much more personally offended when a young woman named Cassandra comes to his room to offer him comfort at Alexis' suggestion. He tells Alexis she is contemptible and that he finds it interesting that she happened to crash on a planet which fits her philosophy so well. She orders him to work a double shift. When O'Brien is caught "wasting time" trying to reactivate systems, she holds his commander responsible and has him put into the box...

Gail Strickland plays Alexis, the domineering school marm of your worst nightmares. Julia Nickson, previously an Enterprise Ensign in *The Arsenal of Freedom*, is Cassandra, appearing on DS9 the same week she joined the cast of BABYLON 5 as Sinclair's new love interest. Steve Vinovich is Joseph. The most disturbing thing about the episode for long-time TREK watchers is the absence of any rousing denunciation of the loss of personal freedom and a highly ambiguous ending.

Not only does Sisko seem incapable of the kind of passion routinely generated by that old warhorse of individualism, James Kirk, you must wonder how many classes he slept through at the Academy if he thinks it is logical to have both of them beam down into such a tenuous situation.(5)

16|**Shadowplay** 26th February 1994

WRITTEN BY ROBERT HEWITT WOLFE; DIRECTOR ROBERT SCHEERER; MUSIC DENNIS MCCARTHY; VISUAL EFFECTS SUPERVISOR GLENN NEUFELD

For the first time in quite a while the whole cast is present and pursuing several distinct storylines.

Dax and Odo are off to investigate some unusual particles detected on the otherside of the wormhole. Odo hardly has the scientific qualifications of the Trill, but he is always eager to visit the Gamma Quadrant in hopes of finding clues to his origins. They are looking for the source of a steam of omicron particles - extremely rare and usually caused by types of matter/antimatter reactions. They trace the steam to the 2nd planet of a star system. In fact, it all seems to be concentrated in one small valley.

They detect no life there but the sensors are unreliable because of the particles. They beam down to find themselves in the middle of a quiet village at night. The omicron particles seem to be coming from an object in the middle of the town square. Dax wants to continue her investigations of this reactor, but they are accosted by Colyus, the village Protector, who is armed and suspicious.

Back on DS9, Quark tries to take advantage of the Constable's trip. Kira discovers that Quark's cousin Kono is trying to sneak aboard. He is wanted for stealing from a Cardassian museum. He escapes onto a freighter but the Major serves notice that Quark won't get any slack from her.

Sisko informs his son that it is time he had a job - and not at Quark's like his friend Nog! He has arranged for the boy to work with Chief O'Brien and get some experience that will look good on his Starfleet Academy application. What he has not bothered to realise is that Jake has never wanted to join Starfleet.

Odo soon tires of Colyus' questions and proves to him that they could leave any time they like without his approval. Colyus does not really suspect them, but he is faced with a mystery he cannot solve. Twenty-two people have simply disappeared without a trace over the past few months, the most recent having gone missing just six hours ago. Since visitors never come here he had hopes that they were the answer. Odo is intrigued and offers to help with the investigation.

He and Dax meet Rurigan, an old man whose daughter was the last to disappear. He has no hope that the missing will ever be found and refuses to hold out false hopes to his young granddaughter, Taya. Once he knows Taya saw her mother last, Odo wants to question that child but she is frightened of his strange appearance.

Kira is in for another surprise on DS9. Vedek Bareil arrives unannounced from Bajor. He explains that he was invited to speak at the station's shrine — but he came because he had been looking for an opportunity to see her again. Kira is a bit flustered but not at all displeased to hear this. Oddly enough, Quark seems pleased too.

Odo tries to talk to Taya again in the morning. She is reluctant to believe that he is a "changeling" because everyone knows they are make believe. They find common ground when she learns he is looking for his parents. She insists that her mother seemed normal and happy just before she disappeared...and she has never gone on a trip before. Indeed, Odo learns that no one here ever seems to leave the valley and cannot understand why anyone might want to do so.

Kira and the Vedek proceed from arguing over theology, to an exhausting springball match in the holodeck, to a cozy dinner in her quarters. Once they start to kiss it is difficult to stop...but then he mentions that the man who invited him here has a gambling problem.

Dax and Odo ask Taya to take them as far as she has ever gone from the village. When they move on a few yards from that spot, Taya's arm starts to disappear...

Philip Anglim appears again as Vedek Bareil, who seems to be taking a very long time to become Kai, but, then, no one else seems to have acquired the job. His mutual attraction with Kira was hinted at in the opening of the season but nothing more had been done about it until this episode. The story leaves it unclear just how intimate they have become by the time he leaves DS9. He needs to read up on what happens to 'love interests' in TREK.

Several veteran actors appear in the Odo story. No funny noses or exotic hairdos this time, just funny hats with a lot of beads hanging from them. Kenneth Tobey, who has done dozens of films and hundreds of hours of television, is Rurigan. Kenneth Mars is surprisingly restrained as Colyus given his career playing zany demented characters (as in *The Producers*). Noley Thornton gives Rene Auberjonois a perfect opportunity to soften up Odo as the little girl, Taya, who worms her way into his affections. There is a very clever plot device here as she keeps trying to get him to change shape and he refuses until the end of the story. Thornton should look familiar as she played the little girl with the *Imaginary Friend* during TNG's fifth season.(8)

Kathleen Toth

The Starless World

by Gordon Eklund (Titan Books £3.99)

THE ENTERPRISE and crew are lured and trapped within a Dyson Sphere. Once there they've to contend with Klingons, undead zombies (some of whom are the survivors of missing earth-ships, including Uhura's father), post-technological natives, and the God of the Sphere, Ay-nab, who is in fact the sentient star at its centre.

The sphere and all within are heading towards a Black Hole that'll soon destroy it. Kirk and Spock have to find a way to communicate with God and make a peace with Ay-nab in order for the Enterprise, the Klingons, the natives, Uncle Tom Cobbly and all, to escape certain destruction. Of course, in the end, this is exactly what they do.

The problem with giving a long out-of-print novel a fair review is that it can be seen in two ways by two different readerships. To those who've never come across it before it's new, and they'll want to know how it compares to recent STAR TREKS, and to those who where around when it first came out, or collectors, who'll want it judged in its historical context.

That's a problem when a novel is bad, good, or average from either viewpoint simultaneously. But *The Starless World* is not a problem in that respect; it's a poor thing no matter how I look at it. This tale has so many themes and ideas clashing and jangling against each other that none are satisfactorily explored: they couldn't be in the space available to a single short novel. This is definitely a case where Less would have been More. There is also much that is unbelievable: when coming across an engineering marvel such as a Dyson Sphere one would expect Scotty to come to the fore and give the away team essential input — but instead he's a glorified transporter operator, totally indifferent to the marvel around him.

In today's context, post-*Relics* and *The Final Frontier*, *The Starless World* contradicts STAR TREK lore, and sits ill at ease with the canon. The ideas in it are very old hat in Science Fiction terms, and have been much better explored and developed in the works of SF masters like Gregory Benford, Ben Bova, Larry Niven and Bob Shaw, to name but a few, leaving *The Starless World* to seem very, very amateurish in comparison. *The Starless World* was no masterpiece when it was first published, and it hasn't improved with age. Like a poor but drinkable wine left over-long it's turned to vinegar.(4)

A gripe, not with this novel, but with Titan, is that with McCoy's face on the cover I thought he'd be the story's main character: he wasn't. Perhaps they've just adopted a house-style for the Adventures that'll cycle through full-faces of TREK's central characters. Even with minor players like Rand, Chapel and Kyle that's only ten covers: wonder what'll happen when the run out? Right then left profiles? I look forward to Adventure 28, which presumably will feature a view of the back of Kirk's head.

Star Trek - The Next Generation: Starfleet Academy
1)Worf's First Adventure
2)Line of Fire
3)Survival

by Peter David, illustrated by James Fry (Archway Paperbacks, £2.99 each).

AN ILLUSTRATED SF series for 8-12 year olds? Now I remember when series like *Tom Swift Jr and his amazing...*, got whole generations hooked on SF. But in those days, long before the advent of Space Invaders, there was little SF in TV and film and less that a kid had access to. The fantastic elements of the stories were what sold them and made them popular then. But is there market for it today, when SF is everywhere, and 8-12 year olds are exposed to the fantastic every day in interactive video games?

I imagine market research showed that adults, worried their kids were suffering from Nintendo brain-death (you know the kind of kid; you ask him to play a game of tennis or football with you, and he reaches for the appropriate cartridge!), would prefer their kids to read a *real* book.

Problem: kids aren't buying books: but their parents are, and guess what? All those old Trekkies are parents now. So it's no surprise that Pocket Books, via Archway Paperbacks, decided it was time to bring out a range of STAR TREK books for the kids' Trekkie parents to buy for them. That seems a reasonable explanation why these cheap short novellas are sold with the other TREKS in the bookstores, over at the SF counter, seven aisles and two floors from the section dedicated to younger readers — the alleged intended readership for the *ST:TNG Starfleet Academy* series.

If that's the case then this series is pure hack work, not intended to please fans, but to exploit a perceived gap in the market; well, no harm in that: nothing gets sold unless someone thinks it'll sell, and that doesn't mean it has to be bad. The underlying link of the series is to set all the stories at the time the established personalities of ST:TNG were young and going through their training at Starfleet Academy. The series starts off with a trilogy, about one of TNG's most popular characters (Worf), written by one of Pocket Books' best story tellers: Peter David.

Peter David is my third favourite TREK author: he always has good plots, tells his stories well, and always, until now, gets the characterization spot-on, so that the humour flows naturally from the personalities of the characters and never seems contrived. His books are usually a good entertaining read. However, he uses American slang inappropriately and he always makes a continuity blunder or two (having Mr Homm serving Mrs Troi years before he was hired [see *Haven*] in *Imzadi*, for instance).

This tale was written before *Homeward* was broadcast, so while David's name for Worf's brother is Simon, it's *Homeward*'s Nikolai that has entered the canon lore. Case of the right hand not knowing what the left is doing I guess. Pity that Pocket and Paramount in the US can't get it together for TNG the way Marvel and Virgin have for DOCTOR WHO. The name being wrong wasn't David's fault, but even so, the story starts with his obligatory continuity blunder: he has Worf and his adopted brother leaving Sergei and Helena Rozhenko to go to Starfleet

Academy from Russia, whereas Worf has said that he and his brother entered the Academy while living on the colony planet of Gault (*Heart Of Glory*). Once at the Academy there follows a group bonding tale between Worf and his fellow cadets; a Vulcan girl, Soleta, a pair of humans — Mark McHenry (an absent minded professor in embryo who later provides the obligatory Peter David in-joke thorough his reference to a "plan so cunning you could stick a tail on it and call it a weasel") and Tonia Tobias (who has a crush on Worf) — and Zak Kebron, who's a Brikar (a tough warrior race who've been at odds with Klingons for generations). They form a tight knit, caring, sharing, team during a Kobayashi Maru-style simulation. The team didn't know it was a simulation — like the Kobayashi Maru it's an upperclassmen's secret (how original — not). Afterwards Worf's brother goes home realising he hasn't 'the right stuff' for Starfleet. The best moments are probably Worf's attempts at human humour, and his classmates misinterpretation of Klingon honour after Worf floors his instructor during a quarterstaff lesson: vintage David stuff.

Worf's First Adventure really serves to set the stage for the next two books which form a single story: the team are sent with a Starfleet ambassador on a minor diplomatic Klingon/human colony. The cadets encounter a Klingon cadet team led by K'Ehleyr, the future mother of Alexander. The cadet teams, after initial animosity, bond, settle the colony's disputes, save it from attack, evacuate the colonists in the available shuttle craft, stay behind to await rescue, solve mysteries, fight off the remaining attacker... and all's well that ends well.

Worf's attempts at Solomon-like solutions to the colonist's disputes are so silly they're laughable — OK, it's a kids' book, but will even an 8 year old kid accept the notion that the whole of the Klingon homeworld experiences night simultaneously? Is it flat or something? David also has developed a habit of using gratuitous continuity in his novels; in this trilogy the practical joker great grandson of Kirk's academy nemesis Sean Finnegan gets his come-uppance from Worf. Honestly now, how many 8-12 year olds will that have any meaning for?

I could forgive that, what I cannot forgive is the total reversal of K'Ehleyr's personality. Onscreen K'Ehleyr, the half human, was contemptuous of Klingon traditions and honour, full of sarcastic sneering wit and ironic humour. It's out of character enough that in these books she's a Klingon warrior in training, but it's a bit OTT to make K'Ehleyr a traditional, fatalistic, stereotyped, Klingon who says that she models herself and her life on the mythohistorical Kahless the Unforgettable: I wanted to scream. At the end of *Survival* K'Ehleyr and Worf part on amicable terms — she even presents him with the statue of Kahless and Morath locked in combat that adorns Worf's coffee table on the Enterprise — which makes Worf's hostile behaviour on meeting her in *The Emissary* totally inexplicable.

If you can forget the K'Ehleyr you know then these books are an entertaining read, but if you, like me, like your TREK universe to be consistent, you'll loathe them. This is the first time that David's made a major continuity blunder, one that the story depends upon, and one in the area that is usually his greatest strength: characterization. His clever explanation of an *earlier* slip (*Vendetta*'s sex changing Captain Taggert) is little compensation. What worries me is that if David, one of TREK's best storytellers, can make such a mess of a kid's series, then what can we expect from the average Pocket Books hack? And these three books aren't written for kids (you can tell that from the amount of undiluted technobabble) — they're an adult novel, split into three parts with younger than usual central characters.

Writing for kids is a specialised skill. So is writing for STAR TREK, so perhaps Pocket ought to be looking out for a kid's author who's also a TREK fan. Until they do, I doubt this series will satisfy anyone. Personally I felt very let down by the later part of this trilogy so while the first book merits an (8), the latter pair get a (3).

Oh yes, the illustrations. While I'm unfamiliar with the media in which they are expressed, I'm intuitively aware of that which I respond to (that's critic-speak for 'I don't know about art, but I know what I like'), and in this case... I didn't.

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine The Star Ghost

by Brad Strickland, illustrated by Todd Cameron Hamilton (Minstrel Books, £3.50)

THERE'S an alien aboard DS9, an alien who's invisible, intangible, and inaudible to adults. This suits the alien, Dhraako, as it's his task to be an observer. But when Cardassians leave a bomb on the station, Dhraako must find some way to warn DS9's inhabitants of their danger...

He tries first through Molly O'Brien, but she's too young to understand. He tries Nog, who flees in terror from a 'Ferengest', a Ferengi ancestral spirit who haunts the unprofitable and honest into poverty and ruin. Only Jake Sisko is old enough to understand. But first Jake must be brought into Dhraako's ghost-like plane of existence, where he will be trapped forever. Of course, in the end, Jake saves the day and is returned safely to his own plane of existence.

Now this is what the *Starfleet Academy* books should have been. Minstrel have got right the size of the book and the size of the text: A big book for tiny hands and large, easy to read, text. I do hope that the size format isn't changed if they do a UK edition, but as Pocket do UK specific editions of the *Starfleet Academy* series, and as publishers are notorious for fixing things that aren't broke, I suppose there's little hope that they won't. As for the story, Strickland has pitched at exactly the right level for 8-12 year olds; STAR TREK simplified, but not to the point of condescension. And it has classic elements of a successful kid's tale — wonder, humour, drama, and a young hero who saves the day where adults could not.

Strickland captures very well what DS9 would look and feel like for a young boy, and the adults are not portrayed as incompetent buffoons: the youth-adult relationships and inter-reactions, always seen from the young person's perspective, are skilfully handled. I can see young readers identifying with Jake Sisko and being pulled into the story. I think he's caught the right balance between simplifying the technobabble and retaining 24th century technology so that it doesn't contradict the adult novels or TV series. Its continuity and adherence to canon are spot-on given the reading level it's aimed at, and Hamilton's illustrations are in a slightly naive style that I know from experience appeals to young people and complements the narrative well.

With these DS9 books, Minstrel (unlike Archway with the *Starfleet Academy* series) have appreciated while the parents will buy them, it's the kids on whom they'll be inflicted! Minstrel's books are written for younger readers.

My only gripe is the absence of any differentiation in the title and numbering of the two DS9 book series, which could lead to some confusion with ordering.(8)

Barbara Barrett

THE AVENGERS

A Retrospective

Lumiere/Woolworths, £10.99

I WISH so desperately that I could find something nice to say about this tape since the quality of Lumiere's other Avengers releases, in their beautiful, uncut, pristine forms, has been so fantastic. Unfortunately, the Woolworth's special *THE AVENGERS - A Retrospective* has barely anything to recommend it. You know those trailers for other ITC tapes that you get at the beginning of all their releases? Right, now imagine one that goes on for a full hour with very looooooong clips...and you've got the picture.

The actual idea of Patrick Macnee's son, Rupert, to have a tape in which his father chatted away about his classic show and so introduced clips was fairly sound, but true enthusiasts who saw the WITHOUT WALES documentary some time ago will have seen a far better example of a study of what made THE AVENGERS so unique. Macnee's comments are extremely vague, very sporadic - totalling barely two minutes of screen time plus a number of rather generic voice-overs. What is worse is the editing of the clips to the narrative material. The clips chosen are always excellent, but the editor seems to have been left pretty much to his own devices and their sequence and manner of use is a mess.

About twenty minutes into the tape, Macnee informs us that THE AVENGERS girls could do anything: dive, fight, drive... And sure enough, in very rapid succession we get three excellent clips demonstrating these skills. But that's it. The fault is not in the over-reliance on clips, but in the manner they are used. *Resistance is Useless* covered 28 years of DOCTOR WHO through extracts and limited linking material very well because the extracts were linked together and kept to the brief glimpses which make modern documentaries snappy and punchy. Here, Macnee's comments often contradict the clip — he says that Steed often 'played dirty', and we're shown him beating up a huge muscle man in *Game* (hardly playing dirty!). Much of Macnee's minimal presence is, surprise, surprise, spent plugging the forthcoming tapes.

The standard of documentaries these days is very high indeed (with particular reference to the imaginative work done on the BBC's HOUDINI of late) and editing plays a key role. The work on this video can only be described as sloppy, akin to that seen on *The Tom Baker Years*. The clips start in the wrong place, run the wrong length of time, and stop in the wrong place. They are also far, far too long and frequently show the whole climax of a classic episode. Two minutes from the end of *The Forget-Me-Knot* introduces Tara as Mrs Peel leaves. Over four minutes of *The Living Dead* shows the whole climax. Three minutes of Steed meeting Horace Winslip for lunch in *The Gravediggers*. Over two minutes giving away the end of the superb *The Winged Avenger*. Four minutes of rather tedious material from *Mission...Highly Improbable*. The last four minutes of *The Cybernauts*. Three minutes of Steed being shot at from *Death's Door*.

Many of the clips chosen, while indicating the show's whackiness, must seem very strange when shown out of context. What will people make of Tara playing trumpet to a suitcase? The quality of some items (notably the scratched print of *Epic*) was also worrying. And anyone thinking that they're going to see a true retrospective from 1961-69, taking in 1976-77 along the way had better think again. No Ian Hendry. No Honor Blackman. No Joanna Lumley. No Gareth Hunt. This is basically material from the 83 filmed episodes starring Diana Rigg and Linda Thorson.

If you're into watching long clips, then this is the tape for you. There are some really choice moments along the way, including Tara's plunge from a cliff in *All Done with Mirrors*, the fight with the clowns from that episode with the long title (no, I can't be bothered), the lovely location work and music of *Dead Man's Treasure*, the spoofery of *The Winged Avenger* and the tag scenes to *The Grave Diggers, Dial a Deadly Number, Bizarre, Legacy of Death, Murderseille, Room Without a View* and others. Although this would have been a superb chance to put on lots of items cut from the Channel Four screenings to tempt the dedicated fan, this is done only with the tag to *Who's Who??* which - again - is terribly out of context and must be terribly confusing for those unfamiliar with the plot.

The clips are nice. But unless you've money to burn, wait for the complete episodes themselves.(2)

Andrew Pixley

Wrapped In Plastic

Craig Miller and John Thorne, co-editors: *1912 East Timberview Lane,Arlington, TX 76014 USA* (UK import, c.£3)

UNTIL I stumbled across this impressive little magazine last year, I had assumed that TWIN PEAKS fandom was deader than Laura Palmer herself. What impressed me was not only the magazine's layout and obvious love for the series, but the quality and consistently high level of thought throughout every issue. *Wrapped In Plastic* debuted in 1992, just as TWIN PEAKS made its final, confused bow with *Fire Walk With Me*, vigorously defending a movie viciously panned by critics nationwide. A MAD-magazine-style parody, *Twin Freaks*, was the only mar on an otherwise distinctive first issue. This quickly gave way to intelligently-written discourses on such subjects as *Good and Evil in the Works of David Lynch, Comparisons and Contrasts Between* TWIN PEAKS *and Blue Velvet*, and TWIN PEAKS *and the American Literary Tradition*. As of late '93, *Wrapped In Plastic* has delivered interviews with many series stars — Catherine E. Coulson (The Log Lady), singer Julee Cruise, and Frank Silva (Bob) — which promises to be an ongoing feature. The magazine also reports on various TWIN PEAKS personnel-related projects, such as Jennifer Lynch's disappointing *Boxing Helena*, and the enigmatic X-FILES (which stars David Duchovny, a.k.a. transvestite FBI agent Dennis/Denise Bryson). Some, however, might question the coverage of WILD PALMS (mainly to show just how much it wasn't TWIN PEAKS, despite US media hype to the contrary) and especially *Tetsuo: The Iron Man*! To date, my favourite issue has been *Wrapped In Plastic* 6, which explores humour in David Lynch's works. It features a complete episode guide to Lynch's short-lived comedy, ON THE AIR, which only aired three episodes in the US before cancellation, though BBC2 viewers were treated to the whole run (albeit in the small hours). If you want to know what's still going on in the weird world of TWIN PEAKS, then *Wrapped In Plastic* is the magazine for you. (I, for one, will always be grateful that they mapped out the timeline of TWIN PEAKS - everything transpired in the month of March, 1989.) It's intelligent, articulate, and generally an all-around good read. *Wrapped In Plastic* has a lot going for it, although it could do better in the 'What Are They Doing Now?' area, and some of the 'fringe' coverage is extremely remote in its relation to TWIN PEAKS. Overall, though, it's a damn fine fanzine — and hot! (8)

Issues turn up in Forbidden Planet, and the editors will ship to overseas readers, but it's a rather messy, complicated process, so for complete information about subscriptions and/or single issue orders, send an IRC to the above address, or contact the UK distributors, Counter Productions at PO Box 556, London SE5 0RL.

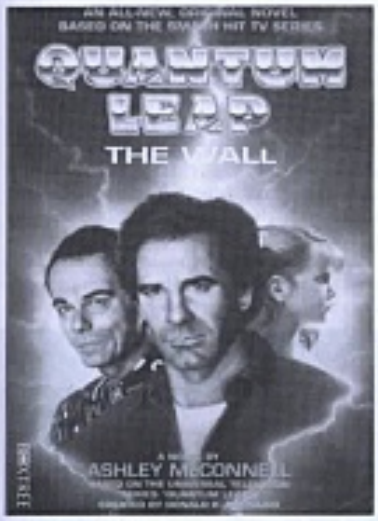
John S Hall

QUANTUM LEAP

The Beginning
The Ghost and the Gumshoe

by Julie Robetaille (Boxtree, £3.99)

NEWLY REISSUED by Boxtree, these books were first published in 1990, and adapt episodes from the series' first (production) season. *The Beginning* novelizes the series pilot, and improves upon its screen realisation in my opinion, though the characterisation of Sam is a little vague, thanks to Ashley McConnell's focus on his surprise at finding himself within someone else's body. (7) *The Ghost and the Gumshoe* combines the excellent *A Portrait for Troian* and the run-of-the-mill *Play It Again Seymour*, edited together as if they led directly into each other... Julie Robetaille's grasp on the characters seems stronger here than in *The Beginning, and* personally I prefer the ghost story of *Portrait* to *Play It Again*...'s cliched private eye pastiche... but that's just me, though it is an average tale.(7) Both books are on the basic side, but the covers are nice, and a great improvements on the photographs of the first editions...



The Wall

by Ashley McConnell (Boxtree, £3.99)

NOW, onto the main feature. As many of you may know, if you read my unenthusiastic reviews of Ashley McConnell's two previous efforts for this relatively new series of original Quantum Leap novels then you'll probably expect me to give it a low score.

How wrong you are...I was apathetic towards McConnell's last two books, but with *The Wall* she seems to have really seems to have found her feet. Not only does she have an interesting, and historic, setting for the story, but she really seems to have improved pace and character wise.

This time round Sam leaps into Missy, an abused eight year old American girl, whose father is stationed in West Berlin, a few days before the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961. What's Sam there to do? At first it appears he's there to prevent the outbreak of World War III, which broke out when her father forgot some important military papers, but in fact he's there to save the lives of her brother and mother, and to ensure she gets therapy. And then he leaps into Missy, now a psychologist, in 1989, as she tries to prevent her divorced brother Tom abusing his children in turn.

The pace of the story is much faster than *Carry Knowledge or Too Close For Comfort*, and although McConnell spends a fair bit of time on the characters involved, she doesn't dwell on them too much as last time, and her constant speculation about the moral and mental ramifications of time travel are thankfully absent.

It's also helpful that British viewers have now had the chance to see more of the Project Quantum Leap complex at Stallion's Gate. The scenes set at the Project seem much more accessible, and those in which Al and Dr Beeks try to deal with the trauma caused to Missy by her leap are some of the best in the book.

My views on arch-bimbo Tina still haven't altered much, but this time she's growing on me a little, as she's a little more sympathetically outlined. It's unfortunate however that the back cover places great stress on Sam's second leap placing him in Berlin on 'the day the Wall came tumbling down' — a nice continuity touch, but one which of little importance within the text. Keith Birdsong's cover is perhaps the best seen so far in the range, and while Ashley McConnell's *The Wall* hardly matches Pink Floyd's, it deserves an (8)

Amanda Murray

The Get Smart Handbook

by Joey Green (Collier Books $12.00)

AH, the old episode-guide-and-background-to-the-series trick! Well Chief, if you ask me this crazy little item ought to be brought to a few people's attention. What with the reruns on Channel 4, Get Smart has turned out to be a show which, while not necessarily of a consistent standard, is refreshing to dip into now and again for the good visual and appalling puns and spoofery from Mel Brooks and the gang. The book offers a similar chance to relive some choice lines of dialogue and silly concepts which I've been doing...and *loving* it.

Whilst the episode guide isn't massively detailed and may actually have missed it by **that** much, it is still a workman like and handy guide to the long-running spy sitcom. It is the other sections of the book which are enjoyable, such as the background to the characters, the organisations of CONTROL and KAOS, secret gadgets in Max's car and apartment, the CONTROL manual and list of equipment, essential codewords and responses and assorted wit and wisdom from Max on a wide variety of subjects. They've even got a full rundown of all the merchandise ever issued on the show. Would you believe a CONTROL entry examination? How about a few words from the cast and crew?

The perfect antidote to serious TV study books, it is well researched, fun, informative and irresistible to episode guide collectors...I asked you not to tell me that. All in all, probably one of the very best reads around.

Sorry about that Chief!(9)

Andrew Pixley

Comet Miniatures Dalek Model Kit

THERE are actually two versions of the kit available, the Mk.1 TV Dalek, reviewed here, and the Movie Dalek, both injection-moulded kits selling for around £19.95. In fact the kits are almost identical in any case, since the TV Dalek kit also includes the claw arm and movie dome-light parts, meaning that the only difference is the absence of the movie Dalek's dodgem-car base. The titling of the TV version as a Mk.1 Dalek is, however, something of a misnomer, for three reasons.

Firstly, the dome lights are not the ping-pong ball variety, but the later Mini indicator type (oddly, they are moulded in black, not transparent, plastic, preventing any attempt to colour them.) Secondly, the frame around the gun stick is totally inaccurate — not only are the circular supports for the wire frames too thick and the wrong shape, but there are only two of them, when a Mk. 1 Dale should have one midway along the barrel as well. And finally, the original Daleks had a double-piston manipulator arm, (making three stages of tubing in all), but the kit only has two. In short then, this kit is really a Seventies Dalek — though for this to truly be the case, the wire frames should be bent at both ends, with no circular supports!

More generally, the kit scales out to the right size, and is definitely the 'proper' Dalek shape. Unfortunately however, the dome **isn't** really the right shape, being too squat and shallow — to rectify this, you'll have to either build up the topmost part with a thin layer of epoxy putty, or carve a wooden master and mould a new dome from sheet plastic. Sadly, this kit is not to scale with the Sevans models, which means there can be no exchange of parts.

On the construction front, the model is, to be honest, a nightmare. The idea of it being built of three sub-assemblies — skirt, shoulders and neckdome — is fairly straightforward and sensible, but beyond that, the designers haven't done their homework. The skirt is made up of individual panels, which must be cemented at the edges. Unfortunately, they require quite a bit of filler, as they don't fit together well. I've been modelling for a good 15 years or so, mainly in 135th AFVs and 148th aircraft, but even that experience didn't help me get the skirt panels to sit right — modelling is supposed to be a challenge, not a frustration, and I suspect that fans who aren't modellers will be driven mad by this. In fact the whole design concept of the kit is a huge mistake — the skirt could, and really should, have been moulded in three parts, split at the A-A and E-E joins. There are no locating pins for joining the three sections, leaving only (relatively) flat surfaces to be joined, and cementing of the sections requires a lot of sanding and filling.

Moving onto the shoulders the assembly of the manipulator and gun stick is simple enough, though if you're using the kit's frame you must be careful how far along the individual lengths you separate them from the sprue. I recommend you use fuse-wire for the frame, with either the kit barrel or a suitably scaled piece of brass tube. The two belts strenuously resist any attempt to bend them to the shape of the Dalek, and require heat treatment to do so, while you will have to switch to superglue to attach the mesh to the belts, and the shoulder slats to the mesh. The construction of the neckdome is also badly designed, since you have to glue a flat disc which supports the dome's axis onto the flat upper surface of the neck, which means there is a great risk of not getting it centred. I'd recommend using a slightly longer piece of plastic rod as a replacement for the axis (part 37), fixing it to the interior surface of the neck roof after drilling a hole through the centrepoint (which is betrayed by where the neck parts join the sprut). The construction of the eyepiece is simple and straightforward — no problems there.

Despite the suggestion in the instruction booklet that you needn't paint the kit as it is moulded in early Dalek colours, you do have to paint it. The supposedly silvery grey plastic is shot through with swirls of lighter and darker colour, and the skirt balls are the wrong shade of blue. I'd advise against painting the model silver, as silver model paint never looks right, but enterprising (and rich) modellers may care to use Bare-Metal foil. Personally, I painted my Dalek in Tamiya Acrylic XF-50, Field Blue, which is pretty much the shade seen in *Planet* and *Genesis Of The Daleks*.

In short then, this is not a good model, especially for fans who are not normally modellers, but might buy it to get a Dalek. The kit has some compensations — the instructions are clear enough, and it looks right (after a lot of extra work), while the plastic itself is sturdy yet malleable enough to cut easily — a definite bonus considering the surgery you'll probably have to perform on it! This definitely not a kit for inexperienced modellers, and even experienced ones will have trouble. As a parts supply for a superdetailer, this is probably a (9), but as a model in its own right it's not more than a (4), and the definitive Dalek kit has yet to be produced.

David A McIntee

Take It or Leave it?

"Are you a Ghost Light person or not?"
"Yes?"
"Oh...oh, you are. Good, because it's one of those stories, isn't it?"

INDEED, it is one of those stories. It seems that you either are, or are not, that type of person. Would the reviewer of the now-postponed *The Green Death* be asked if they were *"a Green Death type of person"*? Would you go up and ask someone if they were *"an 'Invasion of the Dinosaurs type of person"*? No, you wouldn't. Firstly, it sounds ridiculous, and secondly, it just isn't one of those stories.

Ghost Light, like *The Deadly Assassin*, *Warriors' Gate*, *Kinda* and *The Happiness Patrol* before it, has managed on transmission to, one way or another, split its waiting and nervous fandom. It's a split of roughly 50:50. Of course, other stories have managed a ratio of 80:20 against, such as *The Horns of Nimon* and *Timelash*, and as far as *Delta and the Bannermen* goes - I sometimes feel it's me against the world! But when an even split occurs, we have two camps, each shouting as loud as the other. The supporters and the detractors, in regular battle within the pages of fanzines - yes, it was quite fun.

Why *Ghost Light* has found itself in this position, though, is unclear. Unlike the above examples, it is neither contradictory to the programme's established view of itself, nor does it present outlandishly bizarre images, or tell a story that, at first sight, sits uneasy within the DOCTOR WHO canon. No. The reason there appear to be *Ghost Light* persons and non-*Ghost Light* persons lies in the fact that non-*Ghost Light* persons appear to have found it to be, at best, *"too complex"* and at worst, *"the usual Cartmel rubbish dressed up as traditional WHO."* 'Complex,' 'complicated' and 'confused' seem to be the buzzwords

Ghost Light — £10.99
Released May 2nd

that surround *Ghost Light*. Undeniably, it is complex when compared to the majority of WHO stories, and I don't wish that to sound derogatory - I enjoy the odd Master-teams-up-with-monsters-and-tries-to-conquer-the-world-but-fails-again type of story along with the best of them. I just feel rather too much has been made of the supposedly confusing nature of the story. It seems to me that the more simply a plotline is told, the larger the plotholes and cop-out endings it can get away with. It seems we are able to turn a blind eye to such as *"Scaroth - how do you manage to communicate with your other selves?"* and *"Look , I know that's the time control unit from the TARDIS - but what did you actually do with it?"* Paradoxically, if a story is intricately written, people seem to actively search out its discrepancies, prodding them until they become inflamed.

The non-*Ghost Light* person can expand on the original complaint. There have been statements such as *"Pity the poor casual viewer"* and *"I'm glad I wasn't a child when Ghost Light was on - I wouldn't have had a hope of understanding it."* Personally, I believe that both of these are non-starters. A casual viewer in 1989 is just that. There seems little point in grinding episode two to a halt just for the Doctor to explain the previous episode to a redundant character if the casual viewer is so casual that the last episode they saw was episode three of the previous story, and will be down the pub for the conclusion of the present one! And anyway, when you're scheduled opposite CORONATION STREET, you're playing a completely different ball game. As far as children being turned off by *Ghost Light*, as that is what the second comment implies, well, we need to look to ourselves to answer that one. If you enjoyed watching DOCTOR WHO as a child, then you enjoyed it through a different perspective. I would be lying if I said I understood all that I viewed then. It was enough to hear the music, cower at the monsters, watch the Doctor weave his magic and escape unharmed. Perhaps a better, and more appropriate, example would be SAPPHIRE AND STEEL. I well remember being transfixed by this series' strange, supernatural, ethereal quality. I enjoyed it tremendously, although I understood not one word of it! I cite SAPPHIRE AND STEEL as appropriate because there is much of that series' mood which permeates *Ghost Light*. Although we conclude with spaceships and aliens, there is much made of the sentient nature of Gabriel Chase and its occupants. The house is a protagonist, undeniably haunted, living, documenting its occurrences. *"The house will remember"* remarks the Doctor, and it's not too hard to imagine that, in a short while, two passing medium atomic weights could well appear to find, within a deserted house, two statues, a disembodied maid and some cold, congealed soup. But even *Ghost Light* makes more concessions to the viewer than that particular series and imaginary scenario ever would.

What makes *Ghost Light* so engaging and pleasurable to watch and rewatch is its bringing together of so many well-crafted parts: a script so tightly structured, laden with references and innuendo, where even the throwaway lines aren't. An assembled cast that form arguably the best single line-up DOCTOR WHO had ever seen. A collection of char-

Ian Hogg as Josiah Samuel Smith (©BBC Video)

acters, each one progressively more peculiar than the last...and, my God, does *Ghost Light* have characters. A drama that boasts a nutter, two zombies, a vicar, a starving policeman, an angel, two aliens and a Neanderthal man is not your average one, not even for DOCTOR WHO. When such characters are its central players, they could be open to a certain amount of over-playing, to say the least. A quick glance at our own video collection serves to remind us that well-known and respected actors and WHO don't always mix with the best results, particularly if they are called upon a portrayal that is somewhat removed from the commonplace. With this in mind, those that populate Gabriel Chase are played with considerable constraint by their respective actors. Ian Hogg's Josiah creature looks as though he might run away with all the honours. Appearing as if he might crumble at any moment, like an elderly, morphine-induced, weak-healthed relative, he plays all of his early scenes with the eerie detachment of someone on the verge of collapse. Yet, with great subtlety, his diction and actions become increasingly more definite until, like Dracula, he appears, claiming that he no longer needs to hide in shadows; fresh and vibrant, a man half his previous age, and twice as confident.

If Hogg thought he had it in the bag, then he reckoned without some late competition from John Hallam. For an all-powerful being - and WHO has seen more than its fair share of those - this is a somewhat more radical interpretation. Early ideas ranged from a sinister man in black to - as Marc Platt has said - a Norman Tebbit interpretation, so quite how they arrived at such a performance is, unlike the story's other characters, difficult to trace; the peculiar notion of hiring Hallam - an actor with a large, ungainly gait, rugged features and a gruff, gravelly voice - only for him to play it completely against type. I'm guessing, but I think what we have here is an excellent example of an actor fleshing out the cold words on a page into a portrayal that even the writer hadn't thought of. I can't think of anything quite like Light.

Someone once said to me that *Ghost Light* depends solely upon its mood. Not true. But there are few stories that manage to manipulate it so effectively and continuously. Even its obvious, illustrious forefathers, *Evil of the Daleks* and *The Talons of Weng Chiang*, although admittedly twice as long, fail to keep such an oppressive omnipresence. The setting of Gabriel Chase is so real and inhabitable, so grandiose and ostentatious, so heavy and sinister. The house is positively drenched in atmosphere: it oozes down the bannisters, it whispers its secrets in dark corners, it reeks of its evil - give that lighting man a bone! And there is little to lighten the mood. Matthews chomping on bananas, failing to notice his gibbon-like hands, would be funny if Ace's subsequent discovery weren't so horrid; Light's casual indifference over the maid's limb comic if it weren't so macabre; "*the cream of Scotland Yard*" amusing if it weren't so sick. All is complemented by Mark Ayres' best musical score and Alan Wareing's direction which, as before, is tight and extremely modern. Never is the period allowed to stifle the action and the story's telling, a problem that is so often allowed to happen with costume drama.

Then there's 'That's the way to the Zoo,' the burnt toast scene, and the fact that it's the best story of the McCoy era; but, just to prove that I'm not about to run off into the sunset with it, there are a few aspects of *Ghost Light* which, personally, don't work for me. The husks are rather troublesome. Because Gabriel Chase is the archetypal 'house on haunted hill,' conjuring up all the fear and nightmares from gothic novels to Hammer to, dare I say it, SCOOBY DOO, the husks, when you see them, can't quite compete with the aforementioned mood; to close episode one, they aren't nearly horrible enough. Also, they appear to be very much aware that they're DOCTOR WHO monsters. Y'know; they move in that way that smacks of an actor who can't see where he's going: "*That's fine, love. Now just weave your arms about a bit more...Perfect!*" Additionally, if they are the Josiah creature's cast-offs, how are they able to become animated entities in their own right?

So am I a *Ghost Light* type of person?

Yes...I'm a *Ghost Light* type of person.(9)

Vanessa Bishop

The Colin Baker Years

BBCV5324 — £12.99
Released March 7th

DEADLINES can sometimes be frustrating things. I would really prefer not to be doing this review, but the tape arrived so late that I have to do it myself if its to make this issue — unless, of course, the post office can deliver by TARDIS...

The problem is though that I suspect I won't be seen as unbiased. More specifically, there seems to be a core of dedicated Sixth Doctor fans who believe that, because our Executive Editor had a bit of a run in with Colin Baker last year, DWB are setting out to give Colin's releases bad reviews...in fact, one of them went so far as to describe the *Trial of a Time Lord* review as 'disgraceful'.

That's not the case of course. The only guideline laid down for a review is "Say something new, because there can be few DWB readers who don't already know a lot about the series, and about which stories are supposedly 'good and bad' . If you agree with the 'majority' verdict on a story find an unexplored aspect to it —don't waste 2000 words repeating the 'received wisdom'... If you disagree with the majority, explain why this turkey's a classic, or this classic a turkey."

Of course, the potential reviewer's opinion is checked out (I learnt that lesson over *Terror of the Autons!)*, partly so as ensure that an unexpectedly negative review can be balanced by an unexpectedly positive review of the next story from that era (all things being equal, of course), and to ensure that the reviewer has something interesting to say. Take, for instance, *Ghost Light*. Loved and hated. Why's it hated? "Usual McCoy rubbish." Heard that before, in other McCoy reviews, and I'm sure we'll hear it again... But some of those who like *Ghost Light* dislike the rest of the McCoy era. So what's different about this one — why's this one 'good'? Similarly, Keith Topping got to review *The Green Death* because it was a story where he found himself enjoying all the Pertwee icons which usually put him off... Sometimes the attempt at balancing doesn't work, of course — I'd intended that the next Pertwee release should go to an unashamed addict of the UNIT family, only to find that it's *Inferno*, which everybody seems to love...

But, to get back to *Trial*, for that story it seemed that a simple repetition of its faults would be boring... and I noticed that every story of the saga seemed to get somebody's vote as its best... so I set out to commission reviews which explained why this story was preferred. But, despite this, the best any potential reviewer was willing to say was "best of a bad bunch'. It's difficult to print a good review when there's none available, and among the people in line to write a review, there were none available!

But I doubt that'll satisfy this era's obviously dedicated fans, who've clearly heard the stories they love put down so often that they're inclined to feel there's a conspiracy against them...which is why I feel that I'm putting my head in the lion's mouth by reviewing *The Colin Baker Years*.

Of course, the *Years* tapes have won a mixed reception in the past, with the *Hartnell* and *Troughton* tapes widely derided, and *The Tom Baker Years* rather better received, thanks mainly to Tom Baker's effusive personality. *The Colin Baker Years* follows the latter's format (though these are not Colin's 'unprepared' reactions, as he seems to have watched the full stories through before recording), and convention goers will need little reminding that Colin can keep an audience entertained every bit as well as Tom (and will, indeed, find some of his tales familiar). Here, however, he seems a little restrained, perhaps needing an audience to spark against (at one point, in fact, he tries to turn his director and crew into an audience, directing a barbed comment towards 'John', but without a second camera there was no way they could play along), but keeps the tape moving along enjoyably enough.

It starts badly, of course, with that awful version of the theme music established by the earlier *Years* tapes still in place, along with a slightly revamped version of the title sequence clearly intended to cover all the eighties Doctors... And then Colin wanders through the console room of the Longleat exhibition to remind us that the Doctor wasn't his first role in the series... A couple of clips from *Arc of Infinity* follow, which, compared with those on the *Tom Baker Years* seem awfully long (indeed, I'm almost tempted to suggest that anyone intending to buy *Arc of Infinity* solely for Colin's performance should skip it, as most of it's here, but that would be unfair!), but are far better selected and edited. Some of the clips are still cut at inappropriate points... an extract from *The Twin Dilemma* concludes with Azmael's admission "You must concede, you have to be the Doctor..."

Colin Baker as the Doctor (©BBC Video)

omitting the next line, "Thank heavens, I was beginning to have doubts myself...", which would have nicely complimented the famous "I am the Doctor, whether you like it or not" quote showcased later on (and reprinted on the video cover...), but in general *The Colin Baker Years* is a great improvement upon those of Tom in this department.

The clips from *The Twin Dilemma* nicely illustrate the strong character who emerged as the Sixth Doctor over the course of *Twin* (perhaps better than the story itself did), only to be subsumed as his more manic mannerisms resurfaced for much of the following season, as the writers let themselves be guided by *Twin*. Colin acknowledges his debut story's general unpopularity, in one of a number of unexpectedly candid moments (others include his description of Jonathan Powell and Michael Grade's behaviour over the cancellation and his sacking) on a tape which could easily have been little more than a PR puff for the BBC and its video range, before going on to explain his affection for it, and his feelings on 'end of episode acting', and the move to 45 minute episodes.

After which, the tape moves on through *Attack* (where Colin's Koo Stark anecdote, ending on the mention of Sarah Greene and Sarah Berger's appearances as Cryons , is followed by the sight of a Cryon played by Faith Brown... who is rather recognisable, as Colin later comments!) to *Vengeance on Varos*, encompassing a few clips which, Colin readily admits, are there simply because he likes them. And why not? If you can't indulge yourself in the midst of your own 'celebration', then where else!

The Mark of the Rani next, and it was disappointing to find a story I'd remembered without malice (though no particular enthusiasm) from the time contained all Pip and Jane ("no relation")'s later faults. Overdone dialogue, a facile approach to the representation of science... oh dear. Irritatingly, the budget cutting of the early *Years* tapes reappears here as a fairly unrecognisable black and white photo substitutes for THE BROTHERS clip one might have expected as Colin describes his earlier work with Kate O'Mara.

And then *The Two Doctors*, where Colin's affection for Patrick Troughton shines as clearly as ever, and the cancellation... The fateful news bulletin slams in unannounced, cutting hard in an unexpectedly stylish directorial touch (am I the only one to think, on the basis of his second unit work, that John Nathan-Turner might have been better off as a director than a producer?) to Colin's wistful comments on the 'hiatus', which capture nicely how unexpected, and frustratingly inexplicable the decision was at the time...

From there to *Timelash*, a story Colin says he found disappointing, but quite liked on reviewing. Actually, the *Timelash* clips raise an issue which had never occurred to me before — for the Doctor (even the third Doctor, who was perhaps more willing to go along with the authorities than some) to report Magellan to the authorities for 'unethical experimentation' after befriending him seems somewhat out of character — but then we do only hear the Borad's side of the story...

Back into potentially controversial territory now, and the absence of a *Revelation* clip is explained by Colin's matter of fact comment that "for some reason, the author of that story has declined to give his consent" which, (without knowing Eric Saward's side of things) seems as simple a way of passing over with the situation as any... though it did cause me to recall the interesting stress given to Paula Moore's authorship of *Attack* (no other author gets a mention by name unless there's good reason) and wonder whether a point wasn't being made there... (*Slipback*, by the way, isn't mentioned — an omission few fans will regret, I suspect...)

And we move on in the same way... *The Trial of a Time Lord* coverage actually includes a few nuggets of production information I hadn't heard before in here, one of which demonstrates a previously unknown talent of Colin Baker's — you've got to give an actor who can pull off a dialogue scene *filmed in reverse* without dubbing the credit he deserves... after which, as always, Colin's dismay at his utterly unjustified dismissal (by the end of *Trial* Colin had the part well and truly grasped, and was ready to make it his own) comes through, particularly as he describes his final meeting with Jonathan Powell, and the way it contrasted with an American station manager's assumption of the access a star would have to his controller.

The video's cover claims to show the truth behind that faked regeneration, implying that some sort of Behind the Scenes footage of McCoy-as-Baker might be included, but this proves to be merely Colin's explanation of his reasons for not returning. After this, another batch of out-of-series clips wraps things up, first a sequence showing Colin and Nicola attending the Blackpool exhibition to raise funds for Children in Need, and then *Dimensions in Time*'s infamous predecessor, *A Fix with Sontarans*...

Except that this has, presumably, fallen victim to the Saward veto, as the actual sketch, which (with so few stories available) would have bulked out the tape nicely, isn't included. Instead, we get Gareth Jenkins' (wonder if he had to give his permission for the clip's inclusion — and how he'll feel when a fellow sixth former or student locates a copy of the tape!) appeal to Jimmy Savile, and the final badge-presentation ceremony — but none of the 'fiction'. A pity... it had a better plot than *Dimensions in Time*! Finally the tape closes with a reminder of the sixth Doctor's 'return from the dead' in *The Ultimate Adventure* (no clip, and no photos, more surprisingly) and an extract from *More than Messiah* (which is likely to prove confusing to casual purchasers, as Nicola Bryant is actually playing Sophie Aldred's character, not Miss Brown, here!)

So... to buy, or not to buy. Well, it's not a match for *The Tom Baker Years* tapes, but that could afford to keep up a faster pace while still filling its running time. Colin never quite catches fire and it starts a little slowly, but I never found my hand straying towards the fast forward button, as it did throughout the links on *The Hartnell* and *Troughton Years* tapes... If you're a particular fan of the Colin Baker era this tape's a given anyway, and won't disappoint, and if not, it depends how completist you are. While not an essential purchase, it's a rather more worthwhile release than one or two serials already available, and fills an hour and a half most enjoyably...(8)

Anthony Brown

STRANGER THAN FICTION

WITH all the fuss surrounding Kevin Davies' 30th Anniversary documentary, the controversial goings on obviously inspired a certain William Baggs of Nottingham to plunder his video vault and splice together a new offering which promises to take the viewer behind the scenes of BBV — yes *Stranger than Fiction* is the fifth release from the increasingly watchable Mr. Baggs.

The whole presentation starts off with a voice over by DWM's Gary Russell which sets the scene for a selection of interviews, clips, unused footage and out-takes from the back catalogue. It says much for the growing following of the videos that BBV thinks that the market will embrace a documentary of this kind barely three years after the enigmatic Stranger burst on to our screens. As you would expect from Baggs and co. the video is a quality item with a lot to interest both hardened fans and the casual viewer new to BBV. On the interview front a wide range of people are cornered, including Nick Briggs (on the verge of out staying his welcome if he continues to dominate both Myth Makers and BBV releases) and Bill Baggs himself. Most of the interest will doubtless be focused on the contributions from two ex-Doctors — the Stranger himself, Colin Baker, and his *Air Zone Solution* co-star Peter Davison.

It is perhaps Davison who gives the most interesting account of working with Baggs' small unit, even showing some surprise that he was given notes after filming by the director. Colin sports his 'Captain Hook' moustache as he talks of being involved from the beginning and assures us that his occasionally "animated discussions" with Baggs are ultimately for the benefit of the productions as a whole...so no change from Colin there, he's as forthright as ever. The footage which fell foul of the editor's scissors is rather quaintly captioned Previously Unseen Clip just in case we weren't aware what we were getting for our money, and in all honesty it is easy to see just why the scenes unveiled here were plucked from the original versions. Baggs himself gives an account of what he's learned from the series, and it is perhaps an indication of things to come that he concludes the way ahead lies more with the earthbound characters of *Airzone* than the more fantastical tales of The Stranger.

If the video is disappointing any way it's in its claim to show the Doctors discussing *The Dark Dimension*. Whilst this is indeed the case all it really amounts to is a camera intruding briefly on the actors as they all sit at a table to be interviewed for Starburst (you know the one, where they weren't actually together at the time according to DWB....ooops, home goal!) Aside from this the video shows the commitment and hard work involved on both sides of the camera, not to mention the sense of fun which emerges part from the out-takes.

It would seem from the form which came with my copy, that BBV is trying to decide its future by asking the audience if they would a)be prepared to fork out £72 for six releases in advance and b)support a bi-monthly release schedule. Speaking personally I would willingly support a regular series of releases if the quality can be maintained on such a tight schedule, but I would perhaps be less willing to hand over seventy quid in order to earn a maximum interest for the BBV bank account.

Given the staggering achievements so far I'm sure Bill Baggs is quite capable of coming up with further ventures which will build and improve upon what has gone before. Until then *Stranger than Fiction* gives a valuable insight into one of the most exciting developments to emerge from fandom in recent years. Bill Baggs has made it clear that he is a major creative force in the making, and now he's arrived I feel sure he'll be around for a long time to come...

Robert Cope